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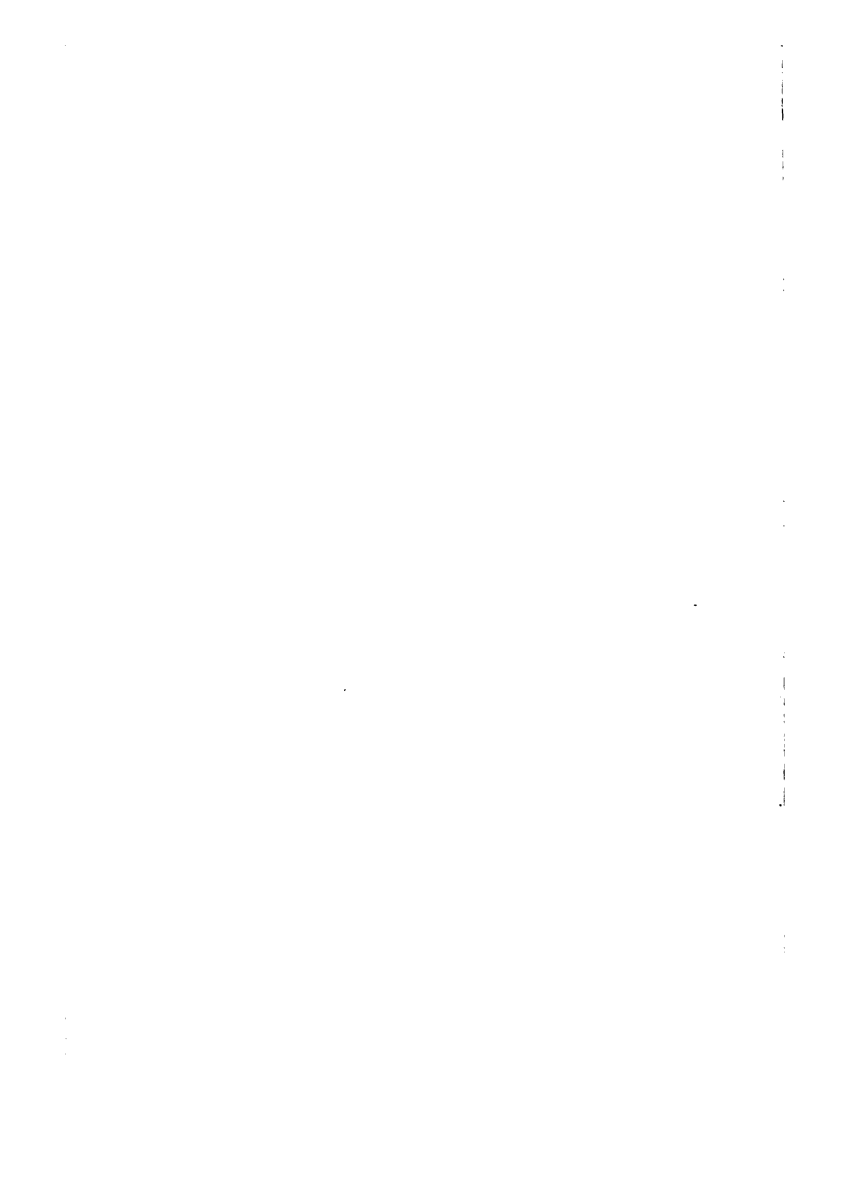
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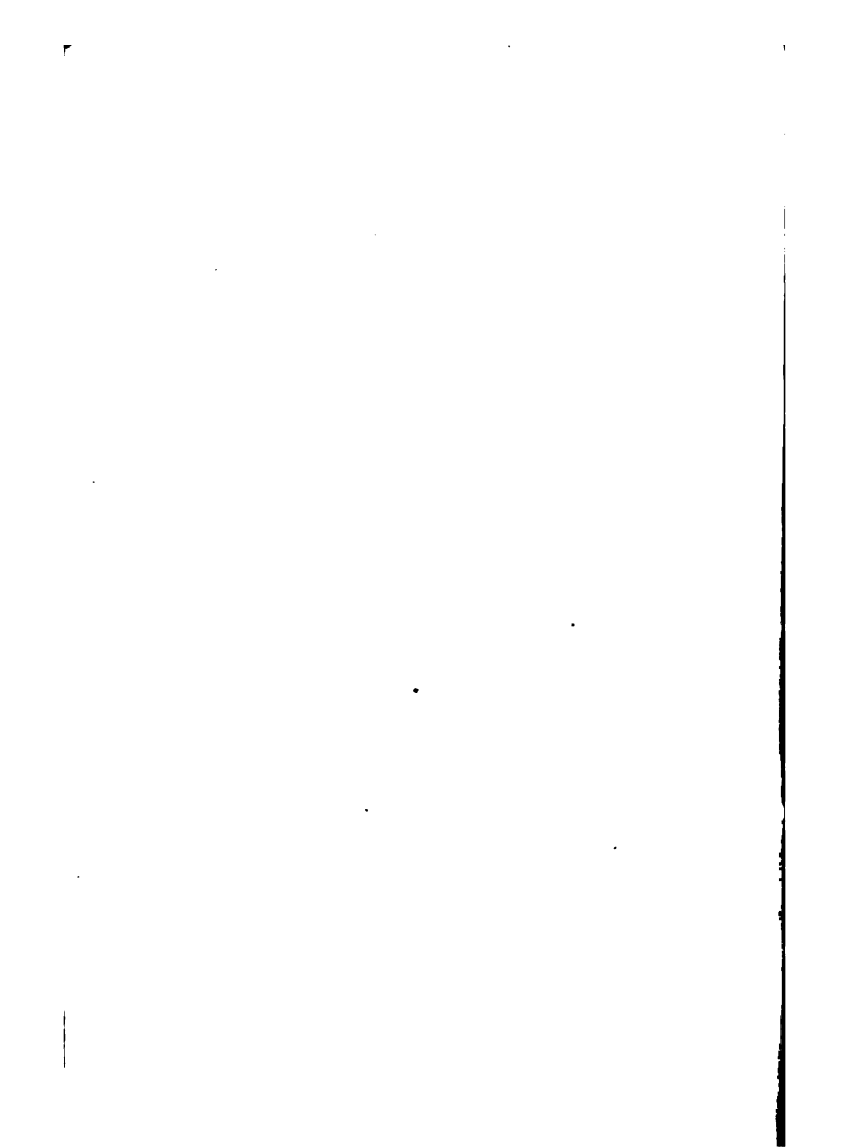
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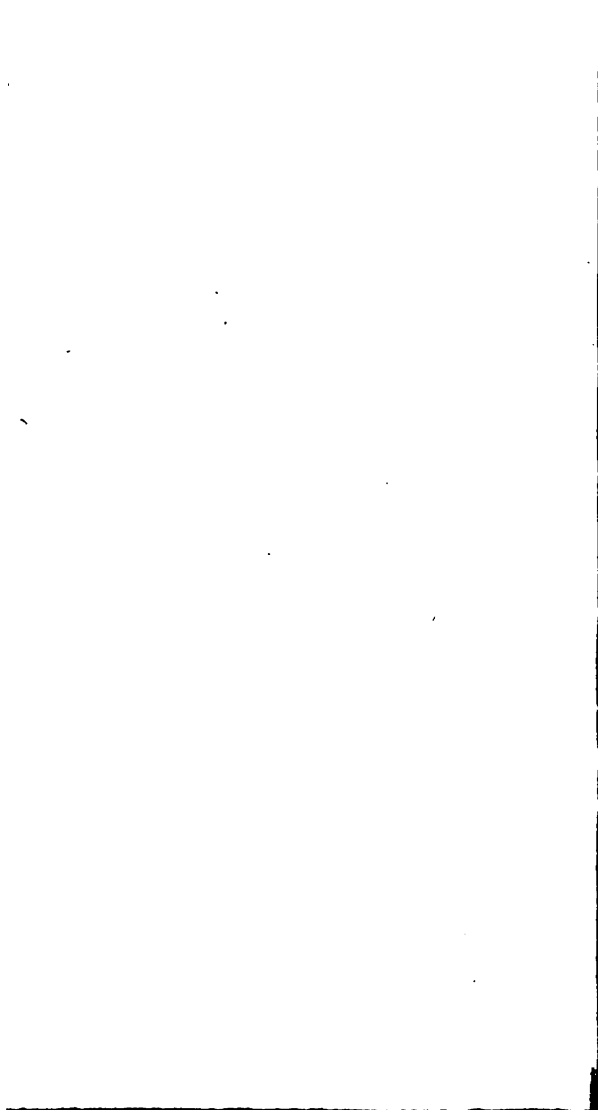
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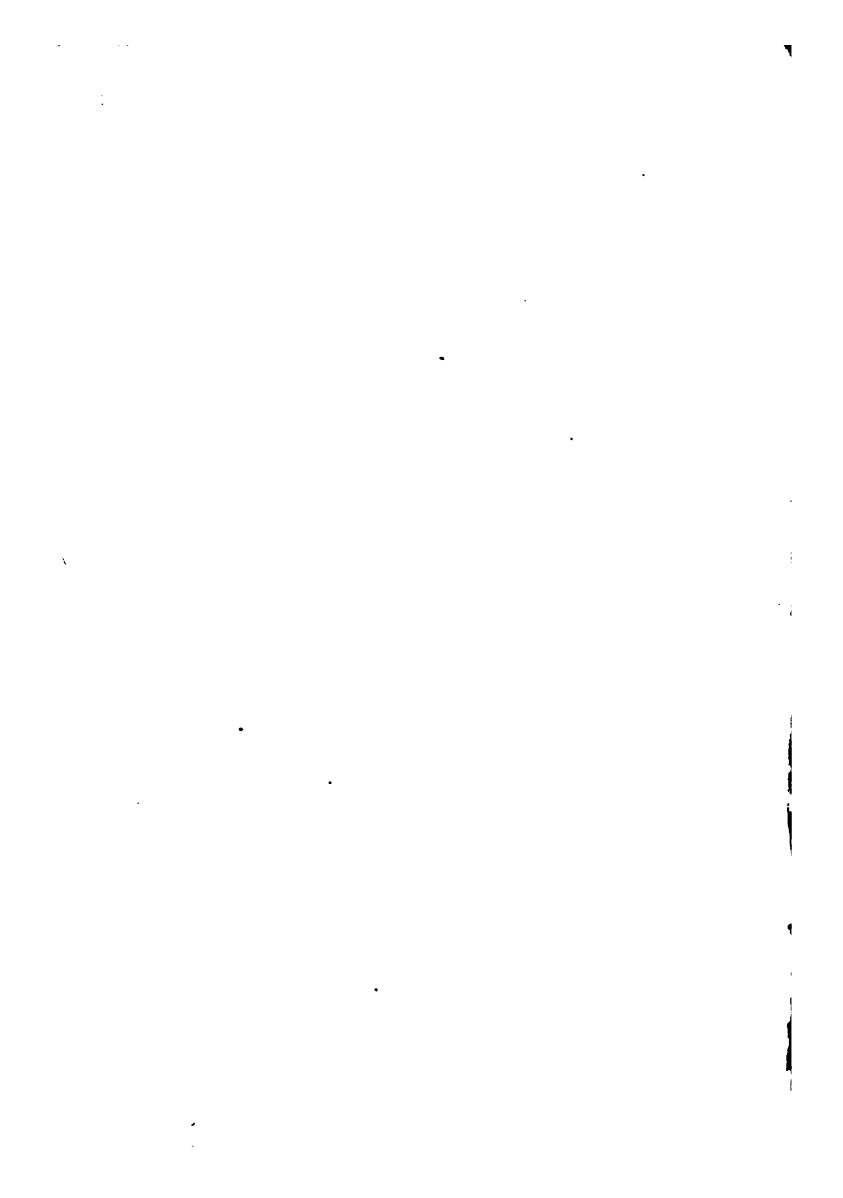
The Belles-Lettres Series

SECTION VI

NINETEENTH CENTURY POETS

GENERAL EDITOR

RICHARD BURTON, Ph.D.





ALFRED TENNYSON

AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY SAMUEL LAURENCE

SELECT POEMS
OF
ALFRED TENNYSON

EDITED BY

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BOSTON, U. S. A., AND LONDON
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1907

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TO
ALL LOYAL DALHOUSIANS
(1889-1907)

"Daran erkenn' ich meine Pappenheimer"

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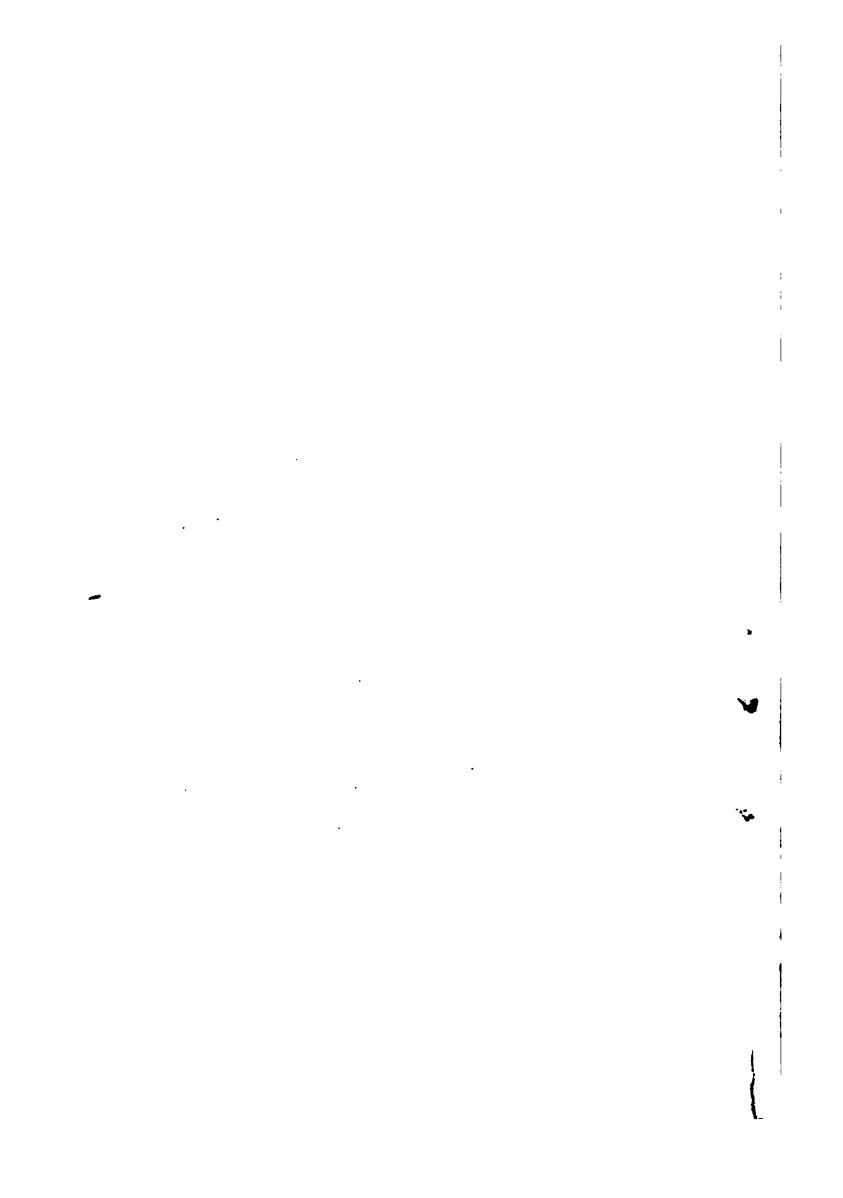
Prefatory Note

THIS volume of selections from the poetry of Tennyson has been compiled first for the delectation of all true lovers of noble verse, by a Tennysonian who can scarcely be brought to admit that the King can do wrong. The spectacle of little critics pertly taking the great masters to task for minor faults is not edifying: therefore the present commentator aims merely at being the interpreter of the poet, not his school-master, or literary adviser. In choosing poems for such a volume as this, the editor can be guided by the taste of the judicious few and by the hearty approval of the multitude of readers. He need include nothing of doubtful value, nothing of unacknowledged excellence. I hope I have done so.

The purpose of the introduction is fourfold, to emphasize the exotic character of Tennyson's verse, to set forth his artistic methods, to define the specially new note in his work, and to sketch his relation to his own age. The commentary makes no pretense at completeness; it is personal; it would be interpretive and suggestive. It implies access to ordinary works of reference; and it is written for Tennysonians only.

Tennyson's extraordinary practice of self-criticism is fully illustrated only in the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*. For this Professor Van Dyke courteously granted me permission to use the results of his scholarly edition. I am glad of this opportunity to thank him for his kindness.

A. M.



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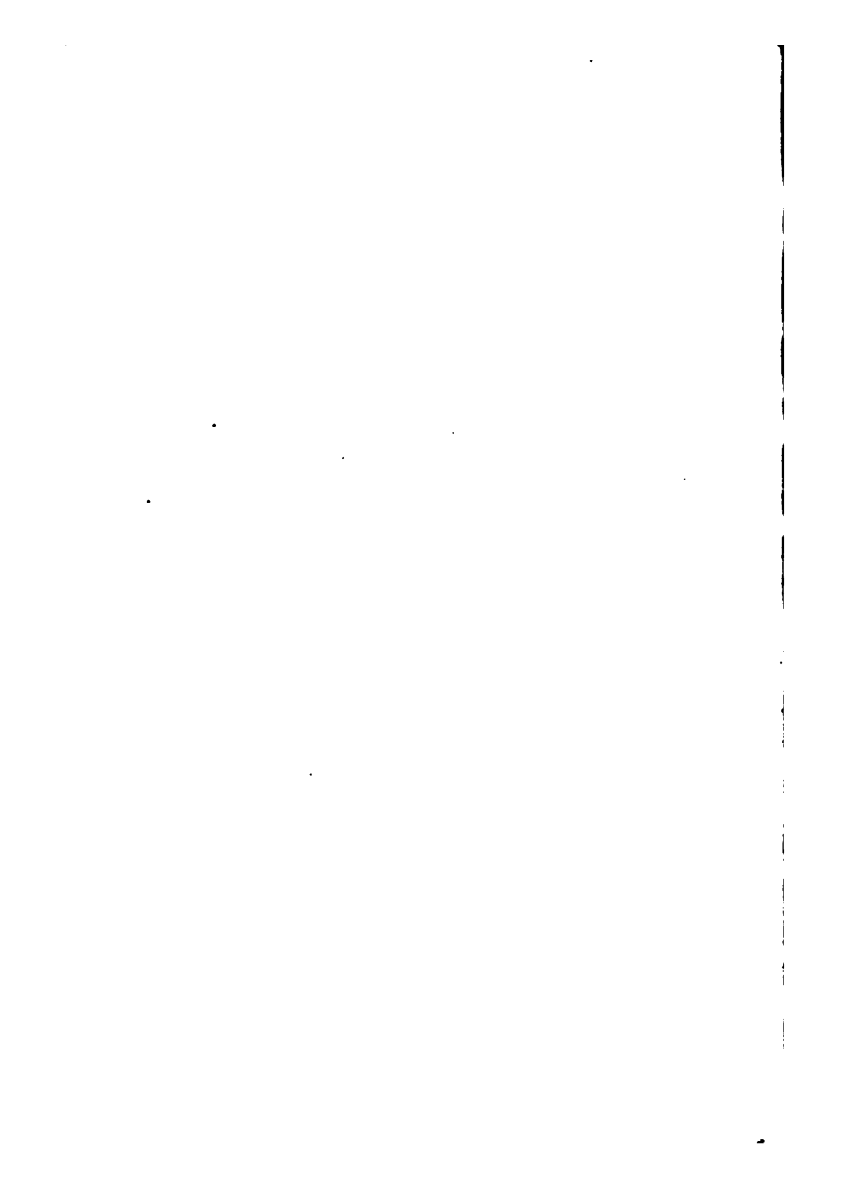
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Life

ALFRED TENNYSON was born at Somersby rectory, Lincolnshire, on August 6, 1809. His father, the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, was a man of varied gifts; his mother, a woman of surpassing gentleness and sweetness, has been celebrated in *Isobel* and the closing lines of *The Princess*; his brothers and sisters, a handsome, long-lived race, were a "little clan of poets." Except for a short attendance at a brutal school at Louth, Tennyson was educated at home, until he was ready to enter Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1828. Together with his brother Charles, he had published a volume of imitative or derivative verse, *Poems By Two Brothers*, in 1827.

At Trinity, he met a group of young men who afterwards became eminent in literature, such as Spedding, Milnes, Trench, Alford, Merivale and Kemble. With the most brilliant member of the group, Arthur Hallam, he formed a famous friendship, which left a deep imprint on his life work. In 1830, he published *Poems chiefly Lyrical*, an unpretending volume which dates the beginning of a new movement in English literature.

In 1831, he left Cambridge without a degree, and, to judge by a sonnet of the time, not too well pleased with the conservatism of his university. His second volume, *Poems*, dated 1833, appeared about Christmas, 1832. On September 13, 1833, Hallam died suddenly at Vienna. He was engaged to be married to Emily Tennyson: his death was a heavy blow to the poet. The same year, Tennyson began to compose the "Elegies", which afterwards grew into *In Memoriam*. After ten years of silence, he published *English Idylls*, 1842, which secured his fame. In 1845, he was given a pension

of £200 a year. In 1847, he published *The Princess*, his fairy-tale contribution to the "woman question."

The year 1850 is Tennyson's *annus mirabilis*; after a long, dragging engagement, he was able to marry Miss Emily Sellwood, a niece of Sir John Franklin; he was appointed Poet Laureate, on Wordsworth's death; and he published what many think his greatest work, *In Memoriam*. In 1852, he wrote his chief official poem, his ode on the Iron Duke, the victor at Waterloo, the hero of the nation. While the Crimean war was raging, he published *Maud*, the noblest love-poem of the nineteenth century. It was loudly decried on its appearance; a recent critic classes it with *The Princess* as a splendid failure; but it stands alone in the poetry of our age, as a portrayal of deep, pure maiden passion for a maid. The year 1859 saw the issue of his four greatest *Idylls of the King*, *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*. The publication of *Balin and Balan* in 1885, completed the one worthy poetic version of the Arthurian legend in English. He had built it up slowly, adding *The Coming of Arthur*, *The Holy Grail*, *Pelleas and Estarre*, and *The Passing of Arthur* in 1870, *The Last Tournament* in 1871, *Gareth and Lynette* in 1872, and, finally, in 1888, dividing *Geraint and Enid* into two parts. According to his practice of self-criticism, he added passages and improved single lines. Like Spenser, he wove allegory into the narrative; in his own words, the epic shadows "Sense at war with Soul." But, to quote Hazlitt, "the allegory won't bite": the *Idylls* can be read simply as stories of the knightly days. In reality, his Elaines and Gareths, his Vivians and Lancelots are types of Victorian English men and women. In 1864, he published *Enoch Arden*, one of his most popular poems. The name of the hero has passed into popular speech.

Queen Mary, which appeared in 1875, is the first of the poet's essays in the drama. It was succeeded the next year, by another historical "closet" drama, *Harold*, which was dedicated, with

Tennysonian magnanimity, to the first Earl of Lytton the son of the man who had abused him most virulently. Altogether, he wrote five other dramas, *The Falcon*, 1879, *The Cup*, 1881, *The Promise of May*, 1882, *Becket*, 1884, *The Foresters*, 1892; of which, *Becket*, in Irving's hands was a distinct theatrical success.

The other notable part of Tennyson's production was the "ballads" so-called, which appeared in the volumes of 1880 and 1885. These are really "dramatic monologues," somewhat in the manner of Browning. They revealed more fully to his admirers that aspect of his genius which had been already manifested in *The Northern Farmer* and *The Grandmother*, — his humor and his sympathetic insight into the lives and characters of the lowly. Of these "ballads," *Rispaak* is the most movingly tragic and was praised magnificently by Swinburne.

Tennyson's career was an ideal poetic career. He produced, if not his best work, at least verse that would make minor reputations throughout his long life and even in his old age. Through his poetry he attained wealth, honors, friends, commanding influence over two generations of English-speaking men and women. His merit was recognized in fitting ways by the great universities, by his Sovereign, and by the nation. On the 6th of October, 1892, he passed away quietly at Aldworth, an open Shakspeare beside him, and the moonlight flooding the room. He was buried in Westminster Abbey among "grateful England's overflowing dead." The *Memoir* written by his son made plain to the world that the nobility of Tennyson's poetry was only the natural outcome of a life and character essentially noble.

Introduction

I

To us who were born and bred on this, the hither side, of the Atlantic, the poetry of Tennyson is, and must needs be, exotic. As time goes on and the two great branches of the English-speaking race, the insular and the continental, grow further and further apart in their separate development of national and social ideals, the more strange and foreign will his work appear to all who are not British born. The conditions of time and place that made or modified his verse are passing, if they have not actually passed away. It is quite improbable that they will ever be renewed. To his own England, Tennyson is already the voice of a bygone age. To us of America, he sings of a world almost as remote and incredible as Fairyland. This region of romance is the England of the early nineteenth century, the first part of the Victorian era. His life, his surroundings, the institutions that went to form the man and his art are so different from our own, that part of his meaning and many of his subtleties escape us. Because he writes our mother tongue, we flatter ourselves that we understand him. In a measure, we may catch the air, but we miss the overtones.

For Tennyson is an ultra English type. He is an exponent of the national shyness and love of privacy.

We live a public or communistic life, herding in flats, in hotels, in boarding-houses, conditions which make home in the old sense an impossibility. Throughout Tennyson's long life, his house was his castle. From birth to death, the poet was a recluse, as a child in a country rectory, as a student in an English college, as a country gentleman in haunts of ancient peace. When Farringford became infested with tourists, he built himself the more inaccessible fastness of Aldworth. He attended an obsolete kind of college, in which the main interests of the students were literature, philosophy, politics and art, and not athletics. He grew up amid the rolling echoes of England's long, fierce, life-and-death struggle with Napoleon. His early manhood was passed in the era of those great political and social changes that made a new England. Throughout those changes, he remained a steadfast though moderate conservative. His religion and philosophy were profoundly affected by the new scientific conceptions associated chiefly with the name of Darwin. He was a life-long admirer of the great state church into which he had been born. With it, he accepted, while he criticized, the social fabric as he found it. He was always a member of a society aristocratic in the literal sense, a society distinguished by true refinement, intellectual culture, lofty ethical standards. The organization of the church, the system of education which he knew, cannot, without special study, be understood by Americans. The very landscape he describes, the very fauna and flora of his verse are strange and foreign to us. Indeed the literature of the daisy, the primrose, the daffodil, the cowslip, the

violet must always remain but half comprehended by all who have not known those flowers from childhood. For us these common English wild-flowers, almost weeds, are lovely exotics.

One example will do as well as a hundred. The appeal of such a verse as this falls absolutely dead on American ears.

“ The smell of violets, hidden in the green
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.”

In the first place we do not see the picture, “ violets hidden in the green.” Our native violets have faint color and no perfume. English violets fill English meadows. Here they are nursed tenderly in hot-houses. Few of us have been so fortunate as to gather the shy blue blossoms in an English May from the grass they hide among, while the hot sun fills the whole air with their delicate, intoxicating odor. In the next place, our associations with these flowers, no matter how intimately we know them, must be different from those who have seen them come every spring since childhood. English violets suggest to us damp florists' shops, engagements, and pretty girls on Sunday parade. The very last thing they could suggest to us is the child's Eden, the time of our innocence. For Tennyson, as for many of his English readers, the chain of association between the two is indissoluble.

And the sense of the difference between Tennyson's world and our own grows stronger the more we study

his work. We have no eyes for the English posies with which the English poets strew their pages. We cannot perceive the woodland and garden odors those pages exhale. We have no ears for the note of the cuckoo, the carol of the lark, the music of the nightingale that ring and thrill through a thousand English poems. To us the poetry of the village church, of the cathedral close, the hedgerow, the lane, the park, the cottage, the castle, the "great house," has one meaning, while for those whose lives have been spent with these things, it has another and quite different meaning. English readers bring to the interpretation of Tennyson a wealth of experience, association, affection we absolutely lack. We either miss that meaning altogether, or feel it vaguely, or translate it into terms of our own experience. Apart from their own value and significance, all these things are symbols of a life far separated from our own.

Of this local English life, Tennyson is the chief poet. There is a certain insularity in him. His sympathies are limited. Critics like Taine and Dowden remark the English narrowness of his outlook, and they are right. He cultivated his poetic garden behind stone walls. Perhaps his most characteristic lines are

"There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be."

There his heart speaks. This is the first article of his practical, working creed. Though he can find flaws in the social fabric, as in *Aylmer's Field* and *Locksley Hall*, he does not want it torn down, or a new-fangled

one take its place. He could not live in any other. Browning, his brother Olympian, ranges Europe and European literatures for subjects. Tennyson is generally content to abide within the narrow seas and the marches of Scotland and Wales. He loves freedom, but it must be freedom of the English pattern. He is thoroughly English in his attitude toward foreigners, "the lesser breeds without the law." He is more English than even Wordsworth, who, though he began as a red Republican, ended as a Tory and a high Churchman. Still in his fervid youth, Wordsworth could dance around the table hand in hand with the Marsellaise delegates to the Convention for pure joy at the Revolution. In the "men of July," in the barricades of '48, Tennyson could see only "the red fool-fury of the Seine." In Scotland, Wordsworth is moved to song by the braes of Yarrow, the grave of Rob Roy and the very field where Burns plowed up the daisy. In Edinburgh, it is true, Tennyson writes of the daisy, but it is a withered flower in a book, which recalls not Burns or Scotland, but his own visit to Italy.

The friendliest critic must concede that Tennyson's sympathies are limited, that his outlook is rather narrow, that his thinking is somewhat restricted by English conventions, that his subjects are by preference English subjects and his landscapes are English landscapes. In a word, he is not a universal, but a local poet, a singer of the land he was born into, of the one time he knew. This may be considered his weakness, but it is also his strength. This is a great excellence, to body forth the

thoughts and aspirations, to interpret in song the life of a nation throughout one stage of its progress toward its unknown goal.

The charm of England for the American traveller is special and unique. Irving tried to express it in *The Sketch-book*, Hawthorne tried to express it in *Our Old Home*, Howells tried to express it in *English Films*. This charm is made up of many parts, the soft, domestic landscape, the evidence on every hand of a rich, ordered, long established civilization, the historical and literary associations. What the well attuned observer feels from without, Tennyson, the son of the soil, feels from within. His poetry is steeped in it, and moves in a pure, fine atmosphere of beauty, of dignity, of elevated thought, of noble emotion. So thorough an Englishwoman as Thackeray's daughter wrote: "One must be English born, I think, to know how English is the spell which this great enchanter casts over us; the very spirit of the land descends upon us, as the visions he evokes come closing round." England cannot possibly be as beautiful as Tennysonland, for over that broods the consecration and the poet's dream. Still it is a fair land, rich in natural beauty, rich in memories of great deeds, rich in great men, a mother of nations. How far soever the various branches of our race may diverge, our common literature must remain a great bond, a force making for unity. So the poetry of Tennyson will long continue to the new nations the symbol of what was noblest in the life of the home island, a rallying-

point for those souls that are touched to the finest issues. The wise Goethe declares that whoever wishes to understand a poet must journey to the poet's land. It is also true that the poetry arouses interest in the poet's land and leads us to think well of the people he represents. So may a study of verse lead to a mutual knowledge in nations, that more and more perfect understanding which makes for the harmony of the world and was Tennyson's own dream.

II

Tennyson has been greatly praised as a moralist, a philosopher and a religious teacher. He is not without significance under every one of these aspects, but under none of them did he first come before the world. He was first, last, and always an artist, an artist born, an artist by training, an artist to the tips of his fingers and to the marrow of his bones. He belongs to that small band of illuminated spirits to whom the universe reveals itself chiefly as wonder and beauty. They live in the *credo* of Fra Lippo Lippi,

“If you get simple beauty and naught else
You get about the best thing God invents.”

They can never rest until they have embodied their visions in outward form. Haunted by both the rapture of achievement and the heavy consciousness of failure, they strive to interpret this basal principle of the universe into color, or bronze, or marble, or tone, or sweet-flowing words. From youth to age, Tennyson

is an artist whose chosen medium is language, a seer who renders into words the visions of beauty vouchsafed to his eyes ; he is a singer, a poet.]

Like Milton he dedicated his whole long life to his art. He held no office, he adopted no bread-winning profession. He never deviated into prose. His programme of self-culture was never interrupted by any Latin secretaryship, still less by two decades of noisy pamphleteering. Like Milton, he set out with a lofty conception of the poet's vocation. He, too, would first make himself a true poem if he would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things. He was not content to be the idle singer of an empty day, like Morris, though perhaps he did aspire on the other hand to be, like Shelley, one of the unacknowledged legislators of the world. He is himself the best example of his own description.

"The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above ;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love."

The poet is a seer ; he is an influence ; through him truth is multiplied on truth until the world shows like one great garden: freedom which is wisdom arises and shakes the world with the poet's scroll. Few youthful poets have had a more beautiful dream of the poet's place and power. The golden clime he is born into is lighted by the same golden stars that shone upon Spenser's realm of faerie. To every aura of beauty he is tremblingly alive. The alluring mysteries, the puz-

zling revelations of the loveliness of women, the form and color of the visible world, dreams and flowers and the morning of the times, — of these he is the youthful interpreter. His earliest poems dwell apart

“ In regions mild of calm and serene air
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
That men call Earth.”

It seems as if nothing ever could perturb that ample, tranced, pellucid ether. He is himself an unwitting prisoner in his own Palace of Art, until the bolt that struck down the friend at his side shattered also the airy dome of that stately fabric and left him desolate to all the bleak winds of the world. But from the very dawn of consciousness till its eclipse in death, he followed hard after the Gleam.

The record shows him to have been an artist in all parts of his life. He thought of his work as a painter thinks of his, considering subjects, studying them, selecting some, rejecting others, making large plans, meditating form, outline, disposition of masses, detail, ornament, finish. He harvested his thoughts, he even garnered in his dreams. He made his *plein air* sketches which he afterwards worked up carefully in the studio. He was not perfect at first ; he made errors, but he persisted and he attained to mastery. He lived for and in his art and at last his art enabled him to live. He had the artist's patience : he was, in his own phrase, a man of long enduring hopes. He could be silent for ten years, the ten precious years between twenty and thirty when the work of most poets is done and over. He could

build slowly through seventeen years the lofty rhyme of his elegies in memory of his friend enskied and sainted; and he could follow out the plan of his *Idylls* for forty. His poetic career is the career of a star, unlasting but unresting. He offers for our acceptance no fragments, only completed things. At the same time, he had the artist's fury, composing *Enoch Arden* in a fortnight, or *The Revenge* in a few days, after keeping the first line on his desk for years. He had his frequent hours of inspiration when he waited mystically for things to "come" to him. *Crossing the Bar*, "came" thus. Another mark of the true artist was his insatiable hunger and thirst after perfection. Deep down in his nature burned an unquenchable contempt for weaklings who set the "how much before the how." In his ears sullen Lethe sounded perpetually, rolling doom on man and on all the work of his hands. His inmost conviction was that nothing could endure, and yet in his humility, he held nothing fit for the inevitable sacrifice but his very best.

How did Tennyson become an artist? Taught by Taine, we are now no longer content merely to accept the fact of genius, we must account for it; at least we must try to solve the problem. We feel that it is laid upon us to explain this revelation of the spirit that is in man. All methods must be used to discover the x , the unknown quantity. The favorite form of the equation is:

$$\text{original endowment} + \text{race} + \text{environment} = x.$$

In a Byron, the problem is simplicity itself. His father is a handsome rake, his mother is a fool, a fury, an aristocratic sympathizer with the Revolution; his nurse is a Scottish Presbyterian; he is brought up amid Highland scenery. Hence it follows that George Gordon will be a libertine, a poet of libertinism and liberty, a singe of revolt and protest, a lover of mountains, a timid sceptic. In a Ruskin, the problem presents few difficulties. His father is "an entirely honest merchant" who is able to take his young son to see all the best pictures and all the best scenery in Europe. His mother educates him in the noble English of King James's Bible. His childish delight is in studying the pattern of the dining-room carpet. Inevitably John Ruskin will grow into a supreme art-critic, with a style of unrivalled pliancy and beauty. But with Tennyson the method of Taine breaks down. There seems to be nothing in his early life or training to make him a poet. True, his brothers and sisters were "a little clan of poets," and he himself lisped in numbers. But he lived until manhood nearly in a tiny retired hamlet, a perfect Robinson Crusoe's Island for seclusion, in a flat, uninteresting part of England, without the mental stimulus of travel or contact with the world. Arthur Hallam, the brilliant Etonian, spending his holidays on the Continent, meeting the most distinguished men and women of the time, in his own father's house is plainly in process of becoming a man of letters, while his predestined friend, reading, dreaming, making verses in the quiet of Somersby rectory, enjoys none of these advantages. "The wind bloweth

where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst *not* tell whither it cometh."

Still the boy Tennyson composed unweariedly in verse. At eighteen, he published with his brother a volume of juvenilia, which are plainly imitative and derivative. It fell dead from the press. At twenty-one, he published a volume of poems, which dates the beginning of a new chapter in the long, majestic chronicle of English literature. What made the difference? What changed the literary mocking-bird into the new poet? My answer is, Cambridge. The most momentous act in Tennyson's whole life was going up to the university in 1828. No later experience, not grief for Hallam's death, not the discipline of his ten silent years, not the reward of wedded life after long waiting, not the laureateship and his many other honors, not the birth and death of his sons could mould his life and genius, as did that scant three years' residence at Cambridge. But for Cambridge and Trinity College, he could never have made his life-long friends, Hallam, Spedding, Brookfield, the "Apostles"; and Tennyson's friendships had no small or trivial influence on his life. At that time, he was not conscious of his debt, and wrote a sonnet prophesying dire things for his university when the day-beam should sport o'er Albion, because "you," (the authorities)

"teach us nothing, feeding not the heart."

This is as it should be. Youthful genius should disparage university systems; they are calculated for the

average, not for the exceptional, academic person. But Tennyson could not escape the influence of Cambridge; it was much greater than he knew. Cambridge colors much of his poetry; for example, the architecture in *The Princess* and *The Palace of Art* is the English collegiate order glorified. He has left us no second *Prelude*, or growth of a poet's mind to guide investigation. The *Memoir* itself does not convey as much information as can be gathered from the poet's own hints and reminiscences in *In Memoriam*. The intercourse with equal minds for the first time in his life, during his most plastic years counted for most; but even the despised university system itself was not without its formative power. The Cambridge undergraduate who had written *Poems chiefly Lyrical* by twenty-one, was very different from the boy of eighteen who collaborated in *Poems By Two Brothers*. Cambridge and Cambridge men made the difference, or nothing did. His college days were the budding-time of Tennyson's genius.

As Birrell has pointed out with so much humor, Cambridge and not Oxford is the mother of most English poets who are also university men. The university of Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron was also Tennyson's. He is in the direct line of a great tradition. When he came up, he seems to have become at once a member of a brilliant group of young men, by some sort of undisputed right, and the most brilliant member of that group became his most intimate friend. Since the days of David and Jonathan, no friendship has been more deep and tender or em-

balanced in nobler poetry. The two were in physique a complete contrast, the contrast of the oak and the birch tree. Both were six feet in height, but Tennyson was massive in build, broad-shouldered and notably strong looking, while Hallam was slight and gracefully slim. Tennyson was dark brown in hair, eyes and complexion, "Indian-looking," "like an Italian," as he has been described. Hallam was the familiar blonde Saxon type, with fair hair, blue eyes and regular features. Both had the distinction of great personal beauty. Lawrence's portrait¹ shows the poet in his youth looking as a young poet should look, "a sort of Hyperion," Fitzgerald called him; and Chantrey's bust of Hallam portrays the finest type of English gentleman. Two more noticeable youths never wore cap and gown in Cambridge, or paced together "that long walk of limes." Their unlikeness in manner and mental gifts was equally marked. Tennyson was the country boy, shy, reserved, a trifle awkward, Hallam was already the easy, polished man of the world. Tennyson was silent, a quiet figure in a corner of a noisy room: Hallam was fluent, and shone in conversation and discussion. Tennyson's was the slower, stronger, deeper nature; Hallam's the more brilliant and attractive personality. Tennyson was more of the artist; Hallam was more of the philosopher. Hallam was the acknowledged leader, the young man, who, everyone was certain, would go far. Tennyson was the poet, admired and honored greatly by these fortunate undergraduates who first listened to the bard chant his own poems

¹ See frontispiece.

Oriana or *The Hesperides*, mouthing his hollow *œs* and *æs*. Their friendship was the attraction of opposites, mutual, intimate, untroubled. The seal was set upon the bond by Hallam's betrothal to the sister of his friend.

It seems probable that Hallam did for Tennyson at Cambridge what Coleridge did for Wordsworth at Nether Stowey. The keen intellectual interests stirring in that remarkable little coterie must in themselves have worked powerfully upon his mind and formed a congenial atmosphere in which his genius might blossom. But Hallam's affection, sympathy, admiration seem to have done even more for him ; and his acute, alert, philosophic intelligence in free interplay with Tennyson's more vague and dreamy thought seems to have released and stimulated the powers of the poet's mind. No record remains of the discussions of the "youthful band" so lovingly sketched in *In Memoriam*. In his friendship with Hallam seems to lie the secret of Tennyson's rapid early development.

Cambridge completed the education which had been carried on at home under his father's direction, a singularly old-fashioned scholarly training, classical in a narrow sense. Tennyson was not like Shelley a rebel against routine ; nor, like Byron, a restless seeker of adventures, nor, like Scott, a sportsman, a lover of dogs and horses. He did not, like Browning, educate himself. Books were his world. His love for the classics was deep and real, as his exquisite tribute to Virgil proves, and their influence is unmistakable everywhere

throughout his work.¹ From his classical training he gained his unerring sense for the values of words, his love of just proportion, his literary "temperance," his restraint in all effects, emotional and picturesque. "Nothing too much" was a principle he followed throughout his poetic career. From classical example he learned the labor of the file, a labor he never stinted. He practiced the Horatian maxim about suppressing until the ninth year. He knew well how to prize the creation that comes swift and perfect in a happy hour; he knew well the danger of changing and altering many times,

"Till all be ripe and rotten,"

but he had a great patience in finish, "the damascening on the blade of the scimitar" as one critic calls it. Finish, rightly understood, is but an untiring quest of truth. The pursuit of the *mot juste*, the matching of the colors of words, the exactness in the shading of phrases are no more than stages in a process of setting forth the poet's conception with simple truth. To rest content with a form of words which merely approximates to the expression of the idea is, to a mind of Tennyson's temper, to be guilty of falsity.

In his choice of themes, as well as in his manner, Tennyson's love of the classics is made manifest. He prefers romantic themes, notably the Arthurian sagas, but his devotion to the myths of Hellas is life-long. *Ænone* is one of the chief beauties of the volume of 1832.

¹ See Dr. Mustard's admirable *Classical Echoes In Tennyson*, for convincing demonstration.

The Death of Ænone, a continuation of the same tale gives the title to his very last. It is only necessary to mention *Ulysses*, *Tithonus*, *Lucretius*, *Tiresias*. While at Cambridge, he came under the influence of Theocritus as Stedman¹ has shown; and the Sicilian muse inspired his *English Idylls*, the poems of 1842, which established his rank as a poet. Tennyson's classicism is very different from the classicism of Pope on the one hand, and the classicism of Keats, Morris and Swinburne on the other. Pope and his school had zeal without knowledge; they had the misfortune to live before Winckelmann. Keats by instinct and sympathy, Morris and Swinburne through study and sympathy, attain to an understanding of Hellenic literature and life. Tennyson's sympathy is founded on scholarship, but he is not content merely to reproduce Hellenic forms, as Swinburne does in *Atalanta in Calydon*, or merely to interpret in re-telling, an old-world wonder-tale, as Keats does in *Hyperion*, or as Morris does in *Atalanta's Race*. His practice is to take the mould of the old mythus and fill it with new metal of his own fusing. If Keats or Swinburne had written *Ænone*, they would have given more "Judgment of Paris" pictures, glowing with splendid color. Tennyson does not deny us beauty, or harmony, or form, or vivid hue, but his *Ænone* is in its last significance "a criticism of life." This modernity is, I believe, the distinctive note of all his classical poetry.

Cambridge and the classics seem to be the chief influences in developing Tennyson's genius, in bringing

¹ Victorian Poets.

out the artist that was in him. A third influence was his extraordinary habit of self-criticism, a bent of mind rarely found united with the artistic temperament. The personality of Tennyson is a curious union of diverse qualities. A mystic, a dreamer, who could, by repeating his own name as a sort of incantation, put himself into the ecstatic state, he had a large fund of English common sense, driving shrewd bargains¹ with his book-sellers and thriftily gaining houses and lands. He was both a critic and a creator, and his critical faculty, strong as it was, never crippled or overcame his creative power. In regard to his own work, he was both markedly sensitive and preëminently sane. Black-blooded, as he said himself, like all the Tennysons, he never forgot or forgave an adverse criticism; but he had humor and a power of detachment. He was too wise to think that he could ever have done with learning, and he was willing to learn even from unfriendly critics. When "Scorpion" Lockhart stung him to the quick in the *Quarterly*, or "musty Christopher" bludgeoned him in *Blackwood's*, he could not help feeling hurt, but neither could he help seeing whatever justice was mingled with the abuse. In subsequent editions, he suppressed poems that they hit hardest, and removed or modified phrases that they ridiculed. Among poets, Tennyson stands alone in this peculiar deference to the opinions of others, and this

¹ J. V. Jackson of Louth actually paid the "Two Brothers" ten pounds for their "poems"; and from Effingham Wilson, Tennyson received eleven pounds. Most poets begin by publishing at their own expense.

habit of profiting by criticism, while resenting it. Most poets take Pilate's attitude, "What I have written, I have written."

But Tennyson was his own best critic. He had keener eyes for flaws in his work than the Lockharts and the Wilsons, and a deeper interest in removing them. Unweariedly he labors onwards to the goal he has set before himself, — perfection. He suppresses whole poems, parts of poems, or lines, or stanzas. At need he enlarges a poem. Constantly he modifies words and phrases. It would be difficult to point to a single poem that has not undergone correction since its first publication. The *Memoir* showed how much good verse he never published, consistently with his praise of the poet,

"The worst he kept, the best he gave."

And Tennyson's "worst" is enough to make the reputation of a respectable minor poet. One of his firmest poetic principles was a horror of "long-backed" poems, against which he warned his friend Browning in vain. With Poe, he would almost consider "long poem," a contradiction in terms; and with classic Gray, he is capable of sacrificing excellent verses¹ for no other reason than that they would draw out the linked sweetness beyond appointed bounds. He held that a small vessel, built on fine lines, is likely to float farther down the stream of time than a big raft. The student of Tennyson's art will be rewarded by comparing the volumes of 1830 and 1832, with the first volume of 1842. The first two were carefully winnowed for the

¹ Notably in *The Palace of Art*.

best; and these were in some cases practically rewritten to form volume one of *English Idylls*. The second contained only new poems. These poems established his reputation; and FitzGerald maintained to the end, that they were never surpassed by any later masterpieces.

From the opposite practice he was not averse, when it was necessary in the interests of truth and of completeness. *Maud*, for instance, was increased by the addition of two poems, sections xix and xxv, or one hundred and twelve lines altogether. The gain in clearness is most marked. Again, the amplification of the *Idylls of the King*, notably of *Geraint and Enid* into two parts, and of the original *Morte Darthur* into *The Passing of Arthur*, to form a pendant for *The Coming of Arthur* rounds out the epic and assists the allegory.

It was in verbal changes, however, that his critical faculty was chiefly exerted. As a boy, Horace was in his own phrase "thoroughly drummed" into him, and, though he did not attain early to a full appreciation of the Augustan's peculiar excellences, such training could hardly fail to re-act upon his own style, and direct his attention to the importance of nicety of phrase and melody of verse. In "our harsh, grunting, Northern guttural," he had much more stubborn material to work upon than the sonorous Latin; but he triumphed. He revealed latent beauties in our tongue, unknown and unsuspected. One principle was what he called "kicking the geese out of the boat," getting rid of the sibilants. He would ridicule the first line of *The Rape*

of the *Lock* for its cumulation of hissing sounds. To make his English sweet upon the tongue was one of his first concerns. He succeeded and he showed our language to be a richer, sweeter instrument of expression, with greater compass than had been thought possible before he revealed his mastery over it. In all his processes of correcting, polishing, emending expression, his one aim is the attainment of greater accuracy, in one word, truth. A characteristic anecdote is recorded in the *Memoir*. "My father was vexed that he had written, 'two and thirty years ago,' in his, 'All along the Valley,' instead of, 'one and thirty years ago,' and as late as 1892 wished to alter it since he hated inaccuracy. I persuaded him to let his first reading stand, for the public had learnt to love the poem in its present form; and besides 'two and thirty' was more melodious." Polish for the sake of mere smoothness was repellent to his large, sincere nature; and he understood the art of concealing his art. The various readings in the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* in the present edition illustrate the nature of Tennyson's textual emendation. Before him, only Wordsworth had treated his printed works in so rude a fashion; but Wordsworth changes sometimes for the worse. It is hardly too much to say that Tennyson's changes are invariably improvements.

It seems then permissible to refer the peculiar development of Tennyson's genius to three causes; first, his education in the classics at home, at college, and throughout his after life as a means of self culture; second, the strong stimulus to mind and spirit afforded by

the life and the companionships of the university; and third, the habit of self-criticism, which made the poet the most severe judge of his own work.

III

That thin little volume with the modest title *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* issued by a Cambridge undergraduate of one-and-twenty marked the opening of a new era in English literature. Those *Poems* set the tune for all the English singers of a century. Browning was the other great poet of the time, but he was long in winning a hearing and he founded no school. But from 1850, Tennyson's influence is dominant: he has a host of imitators. Even the men of marked individuality, Swinburne, Arnold, William Morris, Rossetti are inconceivable without Tennyson. Unless Tennyson had written as he did write, their verse would have been something different. They were all taught by him. The smaller men, the fifty minor poets, the poetlets, poetlings, poetasters, echo from every side Tennyson's inimitable qualities, his refinement of workmanship and tone, his minute observation of nature, his predilection for the gently beautiful. His humour and his dramatic power, which are later developments, remain his own. On the verse of the Victorian age from the least to the greatest, except on Browning's, the imprint of Tennyson is broad and unmistakable. This popularity, this influence, the poet himself understood thoroughly; and he has put the case in the form of a simple parable, *The Flower*,

“ Once in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed ;
Up there came a flower,
The people said a weed.”

Which means, being interpreted, that *Blackwood* and *The Quarterly* had abused his early work. But fame comes; the flower, curst at the beginning, grows tall and wears a crown of light. Thieves steal the seed and sow it broadcast, “ By every town and tower.” Then the people praise it, — “ Splendid is the flower ! ”

“ Read my little fable:
He that runs may read,
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

“ And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed,
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.”

Perhaps it is a trifle hard to call his sincere flatterers “ thieves.” They were merely charmed by his excellences, they fell into his mannerisms, they aspired to reach fame by the road he had made so broad and easy. Still the little fable is a useful summation of much literary history and criticism.

Tennyson’s popularity being undoubted, the question naturally arises, — What caused that popularity ? How did Tennyson’s verse differ from what had gone before ? What reason can be given for this widespread imitation ? What was the new note ? Whence came the

fresh impulse to poetic creation in an age given over to machinery, commerce, science and scepticism?

As critics have pointed out, Tennyson came upon the stage when it was as good as empty. The poets of the preceding age, Keats, Shelley and Byron were dead. Scott and Coleridge were still alive but had long ceased to produce verse. The most considerable figure was the veteran Wordsworth who had still twenty years to live, but whose best work was done. Although his fame was growing steadily towards its culmination about 1850, the prevailing influence was still Byron, an influence which was waning and was to disappear before the gospel of work, and of hero-worship preached with rude fervor by a Scottish prophet, then sojourning in Craigenputtock. How great was that influence is illustrated in Tennyson's own case. He said himself: "As a boy I was a tremendous admirer of Byron, so much so that I got a surfeit of him. . . . I was fourteen when I heard of his death. It seemed an awful calamity; I remember I rushed out-of-doors, sat down by myself, shouted aloud and wrote on the sandstone: '*Byron is dead!*'" This testimony is corroborated by the evidence of the *Poems by Two Brothers*. These juvenilia, as has been said, are imitative and derivative; and the author most frequently imitated is Byron. No fewer than five sets of verses by Alfred Tennyson are in the metre of *The Destruction of Sennacherib*. There is also a poem by Charles Tennyson on Byron's death in the metre of *The Two Voices*, beginning,

"The hero and the bard is gone !
His bright career on earth is done,
Where with a comet's blaze he shone."

In *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, on the other hand, there is absolutely no trace of Byron's influence. In Tennyson's later work, such as *Maud* and *Locksley Hall*, it may perhaps be said to reappear ; but the difference between the work Tennyson was content to publish in 1827 and the work to which he attached his own name in 1830 is almost incredible. There seems to be no common term, except possibly a certain aptness and refinement of phrasing, which may now be recognized as distinctly Tennysonian. When the contrast is considered, it seems clear that between 1827 and 1830, Tennyson's poetical powers must have developed with great rapidity.

Though Byron's influence is absent in the poems of 1830, spiritual kinship between the new poet and an elder poet was at once discerned by both friends and foes. That poet was Keats. The astonishing thing is that not a trace of Keats can be found in the *Poems By Two Brothers* ; nor is it recorded that Tennyson as a youth admired or read Keats as he read and admired Byron. No one, not even the hostile critic, asserts that he imitates Keats or derives from him ; but one and all recognize a relationship between the two. In forwarding his friend's poems to Leigh Hunt for review on Jan. 11, 1831, Hallam praises Tennyson as "the true heir to Keats." In his review in *The Englishman's Magazine* for August, 1831, he compares the two, to Tennyson's

advantage. "We think he has more definiteness and roundness of conception than the late Mr. Keats and is much more free from blemishes of diction and hasty capriccios of fancy." Wilson, though really more severe on the favorable critics than on Tennyson, identifies him with "Cockneydom." Lockhart is more explicit.¹ He introduces Tennyson as "a new prodigy of genius — another and a brighter star of that galaxy or *milky way* of poetry of which the late lamented Keats was the harbinger." Bulwer continues the same gibe in his *New Timon*,² in which he calls Tennyson's poetry

"The jingling medley of purloined conceits
Out-babying Wordsworth³ and out-glittering Keats."

All this is instructive as showing how the new poet strikes his contemporaries.

The testimony is then practically unanimous. Tennyson is praised for being like Keats; he is blamed for being like Keats. In this one thing, his resemblance to Keats, the hostile and the friendly points of view agree. It remains to analyze this general impression more minutely, in order to recover the effect produced by Tennyson's early work upon the minds of his first readers, and to ascertain what seemed to them decisively new in it. For this purpose, there is nothing better than

¹ *The Quarterly Review*, July, 1833.

² "The New Timon; a Romance of London," 1845.

³ In criticising *The Grasshopper*, Wilson said, "but Tennyson out Wordsworths Wordsworth." *Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1832, p. 731.

Hallam's forgotten critique in *The Englishman's Magazine*. If his estimate seems now too enthusiastic, as it undoubtedly seemed at the time to Lockhart and Wilson, we must remember that a friend is writing about a friend, that Hallam wrote from the vantage ground of intimate personal knowledge and that Hallam was right. Time and cooler judgment have confirmed his opinions.

First in importance for the present purpose, though not first in order, Hallam notes Tennyson's originality. The new poet has a new song. "The author imitates nobody; . . . His thoughts bear no more resemblance to Byron or Scott, Shelley or Coleridge, than to Homer or Calderon, Firdúsi or Calidasa." Bowring, who did not know Tennyson, shares with Hallam the glory of discovering the new star just rising in the heavens of literature. His long review in the *Westminster* contains two sentences which are absolutely prophetic. "That these poems will have a very rapid and extensive popularity we do not anticipate. Their very originality will prevent their being generally appreciated for a time." Tennyson's early poems *are* unlike what had gone before; their originality *did* prevent them from being generally appreciated for a time. Like Wordsworth, he had to create the audience by which he was enjoyed.

Next the young critic remarks "five distinctive excellencies" of Tennyson's own manner. First his luxuriance of imagination, and at the same time, his

control over it." To define imagination or to discuss its functions would carry us too far afield. It is the *prophetic* faculty of the mind which out of a mass of ideas seizes on those which separately are disagreeable, but in combination are harmonious. "By its operation, two ideas are chosen out of an infinite mass . . . two ideas which are separately wrong, which together shall be right, and of whose unity, therefore, the idea must be formed at the instant they are seized, as it is only in that unity that either are good, and therefore only the *conception of that unity can prompt the preference.*"¹ Now, no one will deny that Tennyson has imagination, and rich imagination, and that he has that faculty under control. To read the twenty-two poems he rejected along with the thirty-one he retained and rewrote is to walk at dawn in Spring amid visions of light and air.

The second "excellency is his power of embodying himself in ideal characters, or rather moods of character." The correction is not superfluous. With the fulness of his powers, Tennyson designs characters with masterly force and precision, such as the two Northern Farmers, but in the early poems, he represents what Hallam rightly calls "moods of character." The most notable illustration is *The Ballad of Oriana*. In this the central situation, is a beloved woman, slain by chance-medley between two enemies in something the same

¹ Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Part III. sec. II. ch. II. *Of Imagination Associative*. The non-metaphysical reader is referred to this and the following chapters for a brilliant and informing discussion of the whole question.

manner as in *Helen of Kirkconnel*, a ballad which Tennyson was often asked to declaim in his undergraduate days at Cambridge. The "mood" is of utter grief over the woman beloved and lost; and the poet identifies himself so closely with his own creation "that the circumstances of the narration seem to have a natural correspondence with the predominant feeling." Other "ideal characters," which an old-fashioned taste can still enjoy, in spite of *Blackwood's* flouts and jeers, are *The Merman* and *The Mermaid*, just as it "believes in fairies" and in tales of the Land that is east of the sun and west of the moon.

The third "excellency" is his power of description; in Hallam's words, "his vivid, picturesque delineation of objects, and the peculiar skill with which he holds all of them *fused*, to borrow a metaphor from science, in a medium of strong emotion." In this "excellency" Tennyson shows his kinship with Wordsworth. Born in the Calabria of England, familiar from boyhood with the tall peaks that lift the eyes of men heavenward, Wordsworth, the hill-man, has a sympathy with the great things which Tennyson, the dweller on the plain, rarely felt. Tennyson has no line like—

"The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

But in their description of the small things they are alike in simple truth of perception and directness of expression. In the first verse of *Mariana*, Tennyson induces an impression of wistful beauty of the most

commonplace materials,— flower-beds overgrown with black moss, rusty nails fallen from espaliers, broken sheds, weedy thatch. The statement is direct and plain to the verge of baldness ; “The flower-pots were one and all thickly crusted with blackest moss.” In the next sentence, the order is even the order of prose. But these commonplace things grouped as Tennyson groups them seem “ sad ” and “ strange ” and “ lonely ; ” they stand forth in an atmosphere of gentle melancholy, and while the picture is haunted by the sense of tears, it is also haunted by the spirit of beauty. The “ vividness ” of the “ delineation ” comes chiefly from the seer’s singleness of eye. *Mariana* is also a good illustration of strong emotion pervading a poem evenly and guiding the selection of details each of which brings its own contribution to the totality of effect. [Tennyson combines the truth of Wordsworth’s observation, not with Wordsworth’s austerity, but with the sensuousness of Keats.] He prefers, too, like Scott to paint with the object before his eyes, and not to recall it in a mood of contemplation.

The fourth “ excellency ” is excellency of technique. Hallam commends “ the variety of his lyrical measures, and exquisite modulation of harmonious words and cadences to the swell and fall of the feelings expressed.” Being himself a poet, Hallam is especially fitted to estimate the subtle and sympathetic agreement between the emotion of a poem and the form of words ; but the “ variety of his lyrical measures ” would be apparent to the most casual reader. And the “ variety ”

would be more noticeable in the first volume than now, when more than half the poems in it have been suppressed. From *Claribel* to *Crossing the Bar*, Tennyson is consistently "lyrical." His verse makes first the appeal of music ; it wins its way by its delicate harmony.

Writing in 1843, another poet, Elizabeth Barrett, emphasizes the same "excellency." "Perhaps the first spell cast by Mr. Tennyson, the master of many spells, he cast upon the ear. His power as a versifier is remarkable. The measures flow softly or roll nobly to his pen ; as well one as the other. He can gather up his strength, like a serpent, in the silver coil of a line ; or dart it out straight and free. Nay, he will write you a poem with nothing in it except music ; and as if its music were everything it shall fill your soul." ¹ She has in mind *Claribel* which she quotes as a challenge to the Italian to match for concord of sweet sounds. It is not strictly true that he will write you a sentence with nothing in it but music ; even the content of *Claribel* is more than mere harmony ; but the sentence is prophetic of Swinburne.

This rich variety of lyrical measures and this careful workmanship were new in 1830. The prevailing influences were Byron and Scott ; and in their work, the chief interest was the interest of narrative. Their poetry is epic, not lyrical. Both exalted carelessness to the rank of a virtue and in practice erected it into a system.² The reason is obvious. Both were romantic reactionaries

¹ *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*, i. 38 f.

² See the poetical epistles in *Marmion*.

against the classical school of Pope. Their ideal was the ballad, a free, sincere, spontaneous product of nature. To linger over details, to carve and prune, and alter and polish seemed antagonistic to their theory of poetic inspiration. Shelley was hasty by temperament, rushing his poems to the printer as soon as the ink of the manuscript was dry ; often the first verse of his lyrics is the best. In Keats's earliest work, too, a want of finish is apparent ; often in *Endymion*, the rhymes seem to call forth the ideas, not the ideas, the rhymes. Tennyson's mission was to show how strong and genuine emotion could not only co-exist with careful workmanship but furnish its motive power.

Hallam's fifth point touches one great source of Tennyson's power, "the elevated habits of thought, implied in these compositions." He was not perhaps a great thinker, certainly not a great original thinker ; his brain was not so active and athletic as Browning's : but he habitually lives and moves and has his being on the high table-lands of thought and emotion. This is apparent even in his correspondence with his college friends. Tennyson's was a deeply religious nature ; he took life and the world and himself and his art all seriously. Moore is Tennyson's contemporary : he has for theme a betrayed and mournful country, but through his lyric there sounds the tinkle of the drawing-room piano. He cannot manage to make the extinction of Ireland's hopes as impressive as Tennyson makes the death of the swan. All the romantic leaders, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley,

even Byron in spite of *Don Juan*, break definitely with the eighteenth century in their treatment of all the problems of sex. In all the general tone is deeper, more serious, more earnest. Tennyson's poetic creed expressed in the proem to *The Palace of Art* consists of one article, Beauty, Truth, and Goodness are three sisters and never can be sundered without tears. The *Memoir* shows how consistently he lived in that creed.

If the poems of 1830 and 1832 be considered together, it will be seen that Tennyson combines an appreciation of the true romantic and the true classic such as is previously found only in Keats. *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, the most beautiful English version of the Venusberg mythus, shows how the imagination of Keats seized on the passion, the mystery, the childish illusion of the Middle Ages and made them its own. *Hyperion* and the *Grecian Urn* demonstrate Keats's instinctive Hellenism. *The Lady of Shalott*, Tennyson's first essay in the region of Arthurian romance, indicates his sympathetic understanding of the medieval temper and feeling, while *Ænone* is thoroughly classic in its theme, its stateliness, its clear light and its freedom from mystery. In both worlds, he moves with greater freedom and a more assured step than Keats. If not so manifestly inspired, his treatment of both classical and romantic themes is more learned and more finished.

However it arose, the kinship of Tennyson with Keats is unmistakable. In his power of imagination,

his power of description, his power of technique, he comes perhaps closest to the elder poet. His sympathy with alien moods of character which Hallam was subtle enough to detect so early, and his elevated habits of thought are more peculiarly his own. The combination of "excellencies" gave distinction to the new poet and justified the bold statement of his college friend, "The author imitates nobody."

IV

The popularity of an author is of course no criterion of merit. Matthew Arnold was unpopular, while forty editions of Martin Farquhar Tupper were eagerly devoured by an admiring public. Popularity may be the stamp of inferiority. Every generation has its widely read, immortal novelist, who is speedily forgotten by the next. Mr. Hall Caine and Miss Marie Corelli command audiences today which are denied to Meredith and Hardy. It may be doubted whether the master-pieces of Hawthorne ever were able to compete in point of sales with the novels of "a person named Roc." Popularity may be immediate and well deserved, as in the case of Scott, Byron and Dickens, because there is in them an appeal to those passions that are universal in all men; or it may be slow and gradual, as in the case of Wordsworth and Tennyson. Few will quarrel with Ruskin's account of how reputation comes to all that is highest in art and literature. "It is an insult to what is really great in either to suppose that it in any way addresses itself to mean

or uncultivated faculties." The question what is really high in art is not decided *by* the multitude, but *for* the multitude, — "decided at first by a few ; by fewer as the merits of a work are of a higher order. From these few the decision is communicated to the number next below them in rank of mind, and by these again to a wider and lower circle ; each rank being so far cognizant of the superiority of that above it, as to receive its decision with respect ; until, in process of time, the right and consistent opinion is communicated to all, and held by all as a matter of faith, the more positively in proportion as the grounds of it are less perceived." This explanation certainly applies to Tennyson. At first he was discouraged by the unsympathetic reception of his works, the ridicule of the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood*, and "half resolved to live abroad in Jersey, in the south of France, or Italy. He was so far persuaded that the English people would never care for his poetry, that, had it not been for the intervention of his friends, he declared it not unlikely that, after the death of Hallam, he would not have continued to write." ¹ He was, however, a man "of long enduring hopes ;" he was able to wait, and fame came to him at last.

The undoubted fact of Tennyson's long continued popularity is rather strange. There are reasons why his poetry should *not* be popular. Scott and Byron were popular because they had a story to tell and told it with vigor and spirit : but Tennyson has little or no epic interest, especially in his earliest work : the

¹ *Memoir*, I, 97.

Introduction

interest is lyric and therefore less wide in its appeal. Again, he does not relate himself to common life as Wordsworth does ; nor does he, like Shelley, espouse the people's cause. His attitude is that of the intellectual aristocrat, aloof, fastidious, dignified. He is essentially a local and an English poet. Some of his most thoroughly characteristic lines are,

" The noblest men methinks are bred
Of ours the Saxo-Norman race."

Germany, Italy, the United States do not exist in his verse. He evinces no sympathy with the great struggles of these nationalities towards the assertion of their natural rights, even for the right to exist. The Great Republic is rent asunder by four years of terrific conflict, and Tennyson has no word of cheer for either side. But democratic America welcomed and read his poems with as much enthusiasm as his own countrymen.

Why, in spite of these apparent drawbacks, Tennyson was and has remained, and, no doubt will long remain, popular, is now to be considered. A definition of poetry that finds universal acceptance is still to seek. It may be "a criticism of life," or, "the suggestion by the imagination of noble grounds for the noble emotions," or any other one of the hundred that the wit of man has framed : but, whatever it includes or omits, poetry must possess two things — beauty and harmony. Beauty and harmony, harmony and beauty — these are the two principles without which poetry cannot exist ; these are the pillars of the poets' universe.

Poetry, to be poetry, must possess harmony and beauty; and harmony and beauty inform the poetry of Tennyson and are the law of its being.

Literature and poetry, especially lyric poetry, have the most ancient associations with music; and the further poetry strays from music, the less poetic it becomes. Many poets have failed or come short because they failed to understand this basal principle, or else deliberately departed from it. Wordsworth was in feeling a rustic, near the ground, in close touch with husbandman and shepherd, but his verse is repressed and austere and his range is limited. He is not read by workmen as Burns is read. Carducci calls himself a plebeian, but he is an aristocrat when he writes *Odi Barbare*, which only the few can understand and delight in. Whitman, who made democracy a religion, and proved his faith by his works in the Washington hospitals, chanted his swinging pæans of democracy for the benefit of a group of London decadents and scanty coteries of *illuminati* in Boston and New York. They failed, but Tennyson succeeded, because, following the bent of his genius, he set himself humbly to obey eternal and unchanging law, for the principle of beauty inheres as firmly in the universe as the law of gravitation. Nobility of thought, beauty of vision, harmony of word and phrase and stanza, just proportion in the whole, — at these Tennyson aims, and to these he succeeds in attaining. His first appeal is to the ear; his verse wins its way as music does, the most democratic of all the fine arts, and the most masterful in its power to stir the human heart. The poet's limitations, his narrow

outlook, his imperfect sympathies matter not. Music speaks a universal language; and the poetry that comes nearest to music is surest to reach the widest audience. Ian Maclaren's story of the Scottish peasant who knew her *In Memoriam* by heart is no mere fancy. No more beautiful illustration of the power of literature to soothe and cheer is to be found anywhere than the anecdote Mrs. Gaskell tells in the first volume of that treasure-house of noble thoughts, the *Memoir*. "Samuel Bamford is a great, gaunt, stalwart Lancashire man, formerly hand-loom weaver, author of *Life of a Radical*, age nearly 70, and living in that state that is exactly decent poverty with his neat little apple-faced wife. They have lost their only child. Bamford is the most hearty (and it's saying a good deal) admirer of Tennyson I know. You know I dislike recitations exceedingly, but he repeats some of Tennyson's poems in so rapt and yet so simple a manner, utterly forgetting that anyone is by, in the delight of the music and the exquisite thoughts, that one can't help liking to hear him. He does not care one jot whether people like him or not in his own intense enjoyment. He says when he lies awake at night, as in his old age he often does, and gets sadly thinking of the days that are gone when his child was alive, he soothes himself by repeating Tennyson's poems." It would seem that poetry can be an anodyne for old age, sad thoughts, bereavement. The childless father soothes himself by repeating Tennyson's poems. "He does not care whether people like him or not in his own intense enjoyment." Samuel Bamford, old hand-

loom weaver, makes Plato's statement credible, that the rhapsodists reciting Homer fell down fainting in their ecstasies.

Though subject to certain inevitable fluctuations, Tennyson's fame was great and constant. He retained the praise of the judicious, while he won the suffrages of the multitude. The greatest and wisest and best of two generations came under his spell. Few poets have been more heartily acclaimed by fellow poets. Browning's dedication of his own selected poems is typical of the general esteem —

TO ALFRED TENNYSON,
IN POETRY, ILLUSTRIOUS AND CONSUMMATE,
IN FRIENDSHIP, NOBLE AND SINCERE.

In his majestic old age, he became an object of veneration, Merlin the seer. Tennyson was an imperialist, that is, an Englishman impressed with the value of the new nations, the dominions over seas, and the necessity of keeping the empire one. In the last year of his life, he came into touch with the imperialist poet of the new school. He praised, too, Mr. Rudyard Kipling's 'English Flag,' and Kipling's answer to his letter of commendation gave him pleasure: "When the private in the ranks is praised by the general, he cannot presume to thank him, but he fights the better the next day." A list of those who have praised his work would include the best minds on both sides of the Atlantic. Longfellow spoke for America in the Christmas sonnet, which he wrote and sent in 1877

“in sign
Of homage to the mastery which is thine
In English song, —”

But Tennyson impressed the English speaking world of his time not alone directly by the impact of his poetry on the leaders of thought, he exerted a great secondary influence through his hosts of imitators. The parallel between Tennyson and Pope has been sometimes drawn, and not unwisely. Both set before them very definite ideals of technique. Pope's “was correctness;” Tennyson's was brevity, just proportion and finish. Their aims have very much in common. Each would understand the other when he spoke

“Of charm, and lucid order and the labour of the file.”

Both became supreme verbal artists, and verbal artistry is no slight thing. To think of either Pope or Tennyson merely as artificers of word mosaics, as cunning jewelers of phrases is to wrong them. Their search for the exact word was really a search for the idea. Both are poets' poets, in the sense that their literary influence is supreme in their centuries. Both set the tune for their age. The manner of Pope prevailed in the eighteenth century and the manner of Tennyson prevailed in the nineteenth. Arnold, William Morris, Rossetti would have written in another way except for Tennyson. Swinburne, the greatest of them all, simply carries Tennyson's mastery of words one stage further, and represents, perhaps, the utmost possibilities in sweetening the English tongue. The recognition of Tennyson's influence upon the minor verse of the last half

century has long been a commonplace of the reviewer.

It was through no condescension to the taste of the groundlings, that Tennyson won his popularity. He takes high ground and he calls us up to it. Although first and foremost an artist, he did not rest in a worship of beauty. He would not agree with Keats that Beauty is Truth and Truth is Beauty, that this is all we know on earth and all we need to know. He left the maxim "Art for Art's sake" to be invented by his followers. He knew, even as a youth at college, that the nature of man cannot wholly take refuge in Art. He knew that other things must have their share. His own avowed theory of his art is that

"Beauty, Good and Knowledge are three sisters
That dote upon each other —
And never can be sunder'd without tears."

Tennyson's was essentially a reverent, a religious nature. His tendency to brood on the riddle of the painful earth is seen clearly even in his earliest poems; and is thoroughly in accord with the strong religious fibre of the English people. It was an English naturalist who, in the mid-nineteenth century, turned the current of the world's thought. Darwin and his theory of evolution gave a new impetus and direction to the conceptions of man, life and the universe. One immediate result was the shattering of old beliefs. No one felt the conflict between the old faith and the new knowledge more keenly than Tennyson, and no one has represented that conflict more powerfully than he has in *In Memoriam*. Though often cast down in the strug-

gle, faith emerges victorious. Along with Ruskin and Carlyle, Tennyson has helped to shape for English people some sort of *via media* between science and religion. In this love of beauty united with deep moral earnestness, Tennyson is akin to young Milton who sang the praise of purity in *Comus*, and Spenser who intended by the *Fairy Queen* to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline.

"And your experience has made you sad," Rosalind might say to Tennyson as to the melancholy Jaques. He is often hastily described as a pessimist and he certainly chose a mournful muse. His great poem is an elegy, an inscription on a tomb, a resolute facing of the great issues raised by the death of his friend. Without being morbid, he is impressed with the tragedy of life and the fact of death. Even in the *Poems by Two Brothers* he is at times sad as night. *Oriana*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Maud*, *Aylmer's Field*, *Enoch Arden*, *The Idylls of the King*, are all tragic. Disappointed love is the theme of *Locksley Hall*, the two *Marianas*, *Dora*, *Love and Duty*, to mention only a few of his earlier poems. The beauty of the form makes us forget the eternal note of sadness in them all. Tennyson's sadness is the melancholy of the North, which is quite compatible with a gift of humor. His humor is deep and rich, if rather quiet as in the *Northern Farmers*, and is a development of later life. He speaks of his college days as those "dawn golden times," and his first two volumes do reflect the splendor of the sunrise: but though afterwards he can write fanciful medley like *The Princess*, or the graceful fairy-tale like *The Day*

Dream, the first vision has passed away forever. To realize the general sadness of tone in Tennyson, a short dip into Browning is necessary, some brief contact with his high spirits, his unbounded cheerfulness, his robust assertion that God's in His Heaven.

The nineteenth century is now definitely behind us, a closed chapter in the history of human progress. It is too soon to define it, as we can define the eighteenth century; for we feel ourselves part of it still. But certain features stand out prominently. It is the age of industrial and commercial expansion, of natural science, of democracy, of the rise and consolidation of nationalities. The settlement of the planet, the exploitation of its natural resources have gone on with feverish haste. Steam transportation has shifted vast masses of population from the country to the cities and from the old world to the new. It was a practical, commercial, industrial age, and yet it was an age of poets. Never before did poets wield such an influence, because never before were so many people able to read, and never before were national frontiers so lightly over-stepped by books. Scott, Byron, Wordsworth did in a very real sense sway the hearts and minds of men. Byron's influence in particular extended far beyond his native land; his poetry was a genuine call to freedom, an inspiration to all noble conspirators all over Europe; and its power is by no means exhausted yet. The influence of Tennyson has been more restricted to that great section of the human race whose mother tongue is English. For two generations he was their favorite poet. He was undoubtedly the poet of his age, and the fact of his

popularity is flattering to the age. Appreciation means sympathy. As Tennyson was widely read and enthusiastically admired by all classes of minds in his time, he is in a way the mirror of his century. Hence it is not an unfair inference that very many men and women, his contemporaries, were sensitive to beauty in all its forms, possessed broad culture and thorough refinement, lived on the moral uplands, and envisaged with earnestness the tremendous riddles of human life and destiny. For poetry is not an amusement, a recreation. It is truly a "criticism of life." We turn to our poets instinctively for guidance in matters of faith. Not in vain do we come to Tennyson. He may not offer a very certain hope, but he does

"Teach high faith and honourable words
And courtliness and the desire of fame
And love of truth —."

Select Poems of Tennyson

POEMS, CHIEFLY LYRICAL, 1830

CLARIBEL

A MELODY

I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

5

II

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone :
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.

10

Select Poems of Tennyson

Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
 The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
 The callow throistle lispeth,
 The slumbrous wave outwelleth
 The babbling runnel crispeth,
 The hollow grot replieth
 Where Claribel low-lieth.

15

20

MARIANA

‘Mariana in the moated grange.’

Measure for Measure.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :
 The rusted nails fell from the knots
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.
 The broken sheds look’d sad and strange : 5
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
 Upon the lonely moated grange,
 She only said, ‘My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,’ she said ; 10
 She said, ‘I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead !’

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;

She could not look on the sweet heaven, 15

Either at morn or eventide.

After the flitting of the bats,

When thickest dark did trance the sky,

She drew her casement-curtain by,

And glanced athwart the glooming flats. 20

She only said, 'The night is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night, 25

Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :

The cock sung out an hour ere light :

From the dark fen the oxen's low

Came to her : without hope of change,

In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn, 30

Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn

About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'The day is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary, 35

I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall •

A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,

And o'er it many, round and small,

The cluster'd marish-mosses crept. 40

Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark :
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, ' My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

45

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, ' The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said ;
She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !'

50

55

60

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;
The blue fly sung in the pane ; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,

Recollections of the Arabian Nights 5

Or from the crevice peered about. 65
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without
She only said, ' My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said; 70
She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof 75
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower. 80
Then said she, ' I am very dreary,
He will not come,' she said;
She wept, ' I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!'

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,

The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time ;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old ;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

5

10

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue :
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side :
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

15

20

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay

25

Recollections of the Arabian Nights 7

Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept. 30

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on 35
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night

I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb 40
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome

Of hollow boughs. — A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal 45
Is rounded to as clear a lake.

From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillets musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow 50

Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid. 55

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of the Arabian Nights 9

And all the leaves with rich gold-green,
 And, flowing rapidly between
 Their interspaces, counterchanged
 Like lake with diamond-plots 85
 Dark and bright. A lovely time,
 It was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Blue the deep sphere overhead,
 Distinct with vivid stars inlaid, 90
 Grew darker from that under-flame :
 So, leaping lightly from the boat,
 With silver anchor left afloat,
 In marvel whence that glory came
 Upon me, as in sleep I sank 95
 In cool soft turf upon the bank,
 Entranced with that place and time,
 So worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn — 100
 A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
 And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
 Full of the city's stilly sound,
 And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
 The stately cedar, tamarisks, 105
 Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
 Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks

Graven with emblems of the time,
 In honour of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

100

With dazed vision unawares
 From the long alley's latticed shade
 Emerged I came upon the great
 Pavilion of the Caliphat.

Right to the carven cedarn doors,
 Flung inward over spangled floors,
 Broad-based flights of marble stairs
 Ran up with golden balustrade,

115

After the fashion of the time,
 And humour of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

120

The fourscore windows all alight
 As with the quintessence of flame,
 A million tapers flaring bright
 From twisted silvers look'd to shame
 The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
 Upon the mooned domes aloof
 In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
 Hundreds of crescents on the roof

125

Of night new-risen, that marvellous time
 To celebrate the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

130

Then stole I up, and trancedly
 Gazed on the Persian girl alone,

The Dying Swan

II

Serene with argent-lidded eyes 135
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ; 140
 The sweetest lady of the time,
 Well worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich 145
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd 150
With merriment of kingly pride,
 Sole star of all that place and time,
 I saw him — in his golden prime,
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

THE DYING SWAN

I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,

Which had built up everywhere
 An under-roof of doleful gray.
 With an inner voice the river ran,
 Adown it floated a dying swan,
 And loudly did lament.
 It was the middle of the day.
 Ever the weary wind went on,
 And took the reed-tops as it went.

5

10

II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
 And white against the cold-white sky,
 Shone out their crowning snows.

One willow over the river wept,
 And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;
 Above in the wind was the swallow,
 Chasing itself at its own wild will,
 And far thro' the marish green and still
 The tangled water-courses slept,
 Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

15

20

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
 Of that waste place with joy
 Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
 The warble was low, and full and clear ;
 And floating about the under-sky,
 Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole ;
 Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear,

25

But anon her awful, jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold; 30
As when a mighty people rejoice,
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of
gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star. 35
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng 40
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

PART I

5

10

15

The Lady of Shalott

15

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd 20
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ? 25
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot :
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers ' 'T is the fairy 35
Lady of Shalott.'

PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay 40
To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

45

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot :
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

50

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, 55
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue 60
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

60

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights, 65
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot :

65

The Lady of Shalott

17

Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed :
‘ I am half sick of shadows,’ said
The Lady of Shalott. 70

PART III

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro’ the leaves, 75
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel’d
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter’d free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily 85
As he rode down to Camelot :
And from his blazon’d baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott. 90

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot. 95
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd; 100
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river 105
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room, 110
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side; 115
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining, 120
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote 125
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance 130
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott. 135

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot : 140

Select Poems of Tennyson

And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy, 145
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide 150
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery, 155
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 160
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this ? and what is here ?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer ; 165
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot.

But Lancelot mused a little space ;
 He said, ' She has a lovely face ;
 God in his mercy lend her grace, 170
 The Lady of Shalott.'

ÆNONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand 5
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
 The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus 10
 Stands up and takes the morning : but in front
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
 Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn 15
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
 Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,

Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade 20
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper
cliff.

‘ O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :
The grasshopper is silent in the grass : 25
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops : the golden bee
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love, 30
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

‘ O mother Ida, many-fountain’d Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves 35
That house the cold crown’d snake ! O moun-
tain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed, 40
A cloud that gather’d shape : for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 45
 I waited underneath the dawning hills,
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
 And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine :
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white- 50
 hooved,
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft :
 Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt 55
 eyes
 I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
 Cluster'd about his temples like a God's :
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow 60
 brightens
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my
 heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he
 came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold, 65
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
 Came down upon my heart.

“ My own CEnone,
 Beautiful brow'd CEnone, my own soul,
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind en- 70
 grav'n

‘ For the most fair,’ would seem to award it thine
 As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows.”

‘ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 75
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
 And added, “ This was cast upon the board,
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon
 Rose feud, with question unto whom ’t were
 due : 80

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave 85
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.”

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud 90
 Had lost his way between the piney sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel, 95
 Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'. 100

' O mother Ida, harken ere I die.

On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom 105
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue 110
 Wherewith to embellish state, " from many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
 Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.
 Honour," she said, " and homage, tax and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven large, 115

26 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

' O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
" Which in all action is the end of all : 120
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbour
crowns

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-
born, 125
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in
power

Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss 130
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of
power
Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood 135
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear

Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek 140
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law, 145
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.”

‘Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: “I woo thee not with gifts. 150
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair, 155
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks, 160
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,

28 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom."

 ' Here she ceased,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, " O Paris, 165
Give it to Pallas ! " but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

 ' O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphroditè beautiful, 170
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder : from the violets her light foot 175
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

 ' Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes, 180
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, " I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece."
She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm, 185
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,

And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

190

‘ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I passed by, a wild and wanton pard, 195
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch’d fawning in the weed. Most loving is
she ?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew 200
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge 205
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster’d the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther’s roar came muffled, while I sat 210
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Ænone see the morning mist

30 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Sweep thro' them ; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars. 215

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,
The Abominable, that uninvited came 220
Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my
mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men. 225

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears? 230
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth, 235
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,

And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die. 240

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost
hills, 245

Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child! — a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me, 250
Unblest, to vex me with his father’s eyes!

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death 255
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound 260
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know

32 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

TO —

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain, 5
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three
 sisters 10
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie 15
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass 5
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair. 10
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and round,'
I said,
'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade 15
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily :
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide.' 20

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**Four courts I made, East, West and South
and North,**

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row 25
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands, 30
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, ' And who shall gaze
upon

My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise ? '

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd, 45
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aërial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and
traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires 50
From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

.
.

Full of long sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass, 55
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul. 60

36 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract of sand, 65
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

✓ One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall 70
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low, 75
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind. 80

And one, a foreground black with stones and
slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher

All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful
crag,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home,—gray twilight
pour'd 85

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep,—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind, 90
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was
there,
Not less than truth design'd.

: : : : : : : :
: : : : : : : :

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx 95
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
An angel look'd at her. 100

38 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise,
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son 105
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a footfall, ere he saw 110
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to
hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd 115
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne:
From one hand droop'd a crocus: one hand
grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn. 120

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,

Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair 125
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, design'd.

: : : : : : : :
: : : : : : : :

Then in the towers I placed great bells that
swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound ; 130
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his
song, 135
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin. 140

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,

The Palace of Art

41

And all those names, that in their motion were 165
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald,
blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes, 170
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song 175
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five ; 180

Communing with herself : ' All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me.' She — when young night
divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils — 185
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,

‘ I take possession of man’s mind and deed.
 I care not what the sects may brawl. 210
 I sit as God holding no form of creed,
 But contemplating all.’

: : : : : : : :
 : : : : : : : :

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
 Flash’d thro’ her as she sat alone,
 Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth, 215
 And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper’d : so three years
 She prosper’d : on the fourth she fell,
 Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
 Struck thro’ with pangs of hell. 220

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
 God, before whom ever lie bare
 The abysmal deeps of Personality,
 Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where’er she turn’d her
 sight 225
 The airy hand confusion wrought,
 Wrote, ‘ Mene, mene,’ and divided quite
 The kingdom of her thought.

44 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
 Fell on her, from which mood was born 230
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
 Laughter at her self-scorn.

‘What! is not this my place of strength,’ she
 said,
 ‘My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid 235
 Since my first memory?’

But in dark corners of her palace stood
 Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
 And horrible nightmares, 240

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
 And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
 That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light 245
 Or power of movement, seem’d my soul,
‘Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
 Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock’d in with bars of sand,
 Left on the shore; that hears all night 250

The plunging seas draw backward from the
land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance 255
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this
world :
One deep, deep silence all !' 260

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering
sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally, 265
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confus'd with fears,
And ever worse with growing time, 270

46 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound 275
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea ; 280

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, ' I have
found
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, ' I am on fire within. 285
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die ?'

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away. 290
' Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
' Where I may mourn and pray.

‘ Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built :
Perchance I may return with others there 295
When I have purged my guilt.’

THE LOTOS-EATERS

‘ **COURAGE !** ’ he said, and pointed toward the
land,
‘ This mounting wave will roll us shoreward
soon.’

In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon, 5
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did
seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward
smoke, 10
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn did go ;
And some thro’ wavering lights and shadowy
broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

48 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

From the inner land : far off, three mountain-
tops,

15

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with showery
drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven
copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale 20
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;
A land where all things always seem'd the same !
And round about the keel with faces pale, 25
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave 30
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake, 35
And music in his ears his beating heart did
make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore 40
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, 'We will return no more';
And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer
roam.' 45

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the
blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, 55
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in
sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone, 60
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings, 65
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown
of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood, 70
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow 75
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days, 80

The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 85
Death is the end of life ; ah, why
Should life all labour be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last ? 90
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil ? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ? 95
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or
dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward
stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem 100
Falling asleep in a half-dream !
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,

52 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the
 height ;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 105
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory, 110
 With those old faces of our infancy
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of
 brass !

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives 115
 And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd
 change :
 For surely now our household hearths are cold :
 Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold 120
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?
 Let what is broken so remain. 125

The Gods are hard to reconcile :
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath, 130
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-
stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing
lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still, 135
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined
vine — 140
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath
the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak : 145
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :

54 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

All day the wind breathes low with mellow
tone :

Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow
Lotos-dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion
we,

Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the
surge was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his
foam-fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal
mind,

In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of
mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts
are hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds
are lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the
gleaming world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted
lands,

Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roar-
ing deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking
ships, and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a
doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale
of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are
strong ;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that
cleave the soil, 165
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with endur-
ing toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine
and oil ;
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 't is
whisper'd — down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys
dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of aspho-
del. 170
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil,
the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and
wave and oar ;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wan-
der more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
‘*The Legend of Good Women*,’ long ago.
Sung by the morning star of song, who made
His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet
breath

Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho’ my
heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every
land

I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars ; 20

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging
hoofs ;

And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ;
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall 25
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated
blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ; 30
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates, 35
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same
way,

58 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray. 40

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down 45
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did
creep 50
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and
brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far
In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in coolest
dew
The maiden splendours of the morning star 55
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elmtree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath

A Dream of Fair Women

59

Their broad curved branches, fledged with clear-
est green,

New from its silken sheath.

60

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight
plain,

Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,

65

Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;

Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre

Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd

Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,

70

And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd

The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew

The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn

On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd
in dew,

75

Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,

Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame

60 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame. 80

And from within me a clear under-tone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful
clime,
' Pass freely thro' : the wood is all thine
own,
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call, 85
Still more than chisell'd marble, standing there ;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech : she turning on my
face 90
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

' I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came 95
I brought calamity.'

' No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died,'

**I answer'd free ; and turning I appeal'd
To one that stood beside.**

100

**But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws ;
' My youth,' she said, ' was blasted with a curse :
This woman was the cause.**

**' I was cut off from hope in that sad place, 105
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years ;
My father held his hand upon his face ;
I, blinded with my tears,**

**' Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with
sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry 110
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.**

**' The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat ;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the
shore ;
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat ; 115
Touch'd ; and I knew no more.'**

113-116. 1833-1853 :

**The tall masts quivered as they lay afloat,
The temples and the people and the shore.
One drew a sharp knife thro' my tender throat
Slowly,— and nothing more.**

Whereto the other with a downward brow :

‘I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirl’d by the wind, had roll’d me deep below,
Then when I left my home.’

120

Her slow full words sank thro’ the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea ;
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, ‘ Come here,
That I may look on thee.’

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise, 125
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll’d ;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black
eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :
‘I govern’d men by change, and so I sway’d 130
All moods. ’Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

‘The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humour ebb and flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood : 135
That makes my only woe.

‘Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye

That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony? 140

‘ The man, my lover, with whom I rode sub-
lime
On Fortune’s neck : we sat as God by
God :
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

‘ We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit 145
Lamps which out-burn’d Canopus. O my
life
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

‘ And the wild kiss, when fresh from war’s
alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony, 150
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die !

‘ And there he died : and when I heard my
name
Sigh’d forth with life I would not brook my
fear
Of the other : with a worm I balk’d his fame. 155
What else was left ? look here ! ’

64 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.) 160

' I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name for ever ! — lying robed and crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range 165
Struck by all passion, did fall down and
glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;
Because with sudden motion from the ground 170
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts ;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts 175
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,

And singing clearer than the crested bird,
That claps his wings at dawn. 180

‘The torrent brooks of hallow’d Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro’ the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

‘The balmy moon of blessed Israel 185
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams
divine:
All night the splinter’d crags that wall the
dell
With spires of silver shine.’

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro’ the door 190
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm’d and tied
To where he stands, — so stood I, when that
flow
Of music left the lips of her that died 195
To save her father’s vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along

66 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song. 200

My words leapt forth : ' Heaven heads the count
of crimes

With that wild oath.' She render'd answer
high :

' Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

' Single I grew, like some green plant, whose
root 205

Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

' My God, my land, my father — these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave, 210
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

' And I went mourning, " No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers " — emptied of all joy, 215
Leaving the dance and song,

' Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,

The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower. 220

‘ The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den ;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darken’d glen,

‘ Saw God divide the night with flying flame, 225
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

‘ When the next moon was roll’d into the sky,
Strength came to me that equall’d my desire. 230
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire !

‘ It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father’s will ;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell, 235
Sweetens the spirit still.

‘ Moreover it is written that my race
Hew’d Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.’ Here her face
Glow’d, as I look’d at her. 240

She lock'd her lips ; she left me where I stood :
 ' Glory to God,' she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
 Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively, 245
 As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
 And the old year is dead.

' Alas ! alas ! ' a low voice, full of care,
 Murmur'd beside me : ' Turn and look on
 me : 250
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
 If what I was I be.

' Would I had been some maiden coarse and
 poor !
 O me, that I should ever see the light !
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor 255
 Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust :
 To whom the Egyptian : ' O, you tamely
 died !
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and
 thrust
 The dagger thro' her side.' 260

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping
 beams,

Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
 Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark, 265
 Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,
 A light of ancient France ;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish
 Death,
 Who kneeling, with one arm about her
 king, 270
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
 Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep 275
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull
 pain

Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again !
 But no two dreams are like. 280

70 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be exprest
By signs or groans or tears ;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest
art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

285

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

5

'T is strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed, 10
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
 He lends us ; but, when love is grown
 To ripeness, that on which it throve 15
 Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !
 In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;
 Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass ;
 One went, who never hath return'd. 20

He will not smile — not speak to me
 Once more. Two years his chair is seen
 Empty before us. That was he
 Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star 25
 Rose with you thro' a little arc
 Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
 Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust
 I honour and his living worth : 30
 A man more pure and bold and just
 Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
 Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.
 Great Nature is more wise than I : 35
 I will not tell you not to weep.

72 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
 Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,
 I will not even preach to you,
 ' Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
 She loveth her own anguish deep
 More than much pleasure. Let her will
 Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, ' God's ordinance
 Of Death is blown in every wind; '
 For that is not a common chance
 That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
 In all our hearts, as mournful light
 That broods above the fallen sun,
 And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near
 Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
 Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
 Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
 How *should* I soothe you anyway,
 Who miss the brother of your youth ?
 Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :
 Both are my friends, and my true breast,
 Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
 That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make 65
 Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease
 Although myself could almost take
 The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :
 Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul, 70
 While the stars burn, the moons increase,
 And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
 Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
 Sleep full of rest from head to feet ; 75
 Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

ENGLISH IDYLLS AND OTHER
POEMS. 1842.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep, 5
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land. 10
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
' The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights 15
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls 20
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I made, —
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
 To rule once more — but let what will be, be,
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm 25
 That without help I cannot last till morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
 Which was my pride: for thou rememberest
 how

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake, 30
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 Holding the sword — and how I rowed across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a king :)
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known : 35
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle mere :
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me
 word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus, 40
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept 45
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men.
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping
down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock, 50
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt : 55
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind, 60
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king. 65

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
' Hast thou performed my mission which I gave ?
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? '

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 ' I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, 70
 And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and
 pale :
 ' Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as bescem'd
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight : 75
 For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
 As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing 80
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt, 85
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
 His palms together, and he cried aloud.

' And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth, 90
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many
 men.

78 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

What good should follow this, if this were
done ?

What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand 95
An act unprofitable, against himself ?

The King is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord

Should be to aftertime, but empty breath

And rumors of a doubt ? but were this kept, 100

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,

Saying, " King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps 105

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honour and much fame were
lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit, 110

And hid Excalibur the second time,

And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :

' What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast
heard ? '

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere : 115
 ' I heard the water lapping on the crag,
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in
 wrath :

' Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me ! 120
 Authority forgets a dying king,
 Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
 That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou
 art,
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
 In whom should meet the offices of all, 125
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence ; 130
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword, 135
 And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great
 brand
 Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,

80 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an
arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock 140
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him 143
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
breath :
' Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? ' 150

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
' Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men, 155
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling
him ;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd
him 160
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing
hard :

'My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone,
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear 165
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere 170
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs. 175

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear ' Quick,
quick !
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.' 180
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

82 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry

Before. His own thought drove him, like a
goad. 185

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves

And barren chasms, and all to left and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he
based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels — 190

And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,

And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,

Beneath them ; and descending they were ware 195

That all the decks were dense with stately forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by
these

Three Queens with crowns of gold — and from
them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,

And, as it were one voice, an agony 200

Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the
barge.'

So to the barge they came. There those three
Queens 205

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and
wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his
hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud, 210
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was
white

And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with
drops 215

Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne — were parch'd with
dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his
lips. 220

So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,

84 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

225

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere :
' Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance, 230
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world, 235
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :
' The old order changeth, yielding place to new, 240
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
I have lived my life, and that which I have,
done
May He within Himself make pure ! but thou, 245
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats 250
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them
friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God. 255
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, 260
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail 265
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted
swan —

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull 270
Look'd the black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER;
OR THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portioned in halves between us, that we grew 5
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired 10
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little; — Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit — oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless moons, 15
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing. Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings till he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her, 20
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
'When will *you* paint like this?' and I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)

The Gardener's Daughter

87

'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love, un-
perceived,
A more ideal Artist he than all, 25
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those
eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.'
And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after that, 30
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece.'
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it 35
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream, 40
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine, 45
And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen ; not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard 50
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter ? Where
was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot ? The common mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise of her 55
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before 60
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like winged
seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and saw, 65
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul ;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream 70
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares, 75
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
Drew downward: but all else of heaven was
pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And now, 80
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its
sound,
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of
these),
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, 85
stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he near'd 90
His happy home, the ground. To left and
right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day. 95

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,
'Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you
they sing
Like poets, from the vanity of song?
Or have they any sense of why they sing?' 100
And would they praise the heavens for what
they have?'
And I made answer, 'Were there nothing
else
For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my
thought, 105
And on we went; but ere an hour had pass'd,
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North;
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a privet hedge;
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk 110
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume,
blew
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade. 115
The garden-glasses glanced, and momentarily
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

The Gardener's Daughter

91

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps the
house.'

He nodded, but a moment afterwards

He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he ceased I
turn'd,

120

And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had
caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm aloft —
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the
shape —

125

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side : the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist —

130

Ah happy shade — and still went wavering down,
But ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes and all her Hebe bloom,
And doubled her own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

140

So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a
Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come nor from her tendance
turn'd

Into the world without ; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent, 145
This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her :

‘ Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull’d
Were worth a hundred kisses press’d on lips
Less exquisite than thine.’

She look'd : but all
Suffused with blushes — neither self-possess'd
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning,
wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips 155
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,

Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there 160
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way
 With solemn gibe did Eustice banter me.
 'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top of Art. 165
 You cannot fail to work in hues to dim
 The Titianic Flora. Will you match
 My Juliet? you, not you, — the Master, Love,
 A more ideal Artist he than all.'

So home I went and could not sleep for joy, 170
 Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
 Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
 And shaping faithful record of a glance
 That graced the giving — such a noise of life
 Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice 175
 Call'd to me from the years to come, and such
 A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.
 And all that night I heard the watchman peal
 The sliding season: all that night I heard
 The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours. 180
 The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
 O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
 Distilling odours on me as they went
 To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all 185
 Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor
 storm
 Could keep me from the Eden where she dwelt.

94 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Light pretexts drew me ; sometimes a Dutch
love

For tulips ; then for roses, moss, or musk,
To grace my city rooms ; or fruits and cream 190
Served in the weeping elm ; and more and more
A word could bring the colour to her cheek ;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew ;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.

The daughters of the year, 195

One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd ;
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;
And each in passing touch'd with some new
grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day, 200
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep ' I will,'
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds : but I rose up 205
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd
The wicket-gate and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third, 210
Between us, in the circle of his arms

Enwound us both ; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows : from them
clash'd 215

The bells ; we listen'd ; with the time we play'd,
We spoke of other things ; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish until we settled there. 220

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ; 225
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering ' I am thine.' 230

Shall I cease here ? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion ? Would you learn at
full
How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades 235

Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
 I had not staid so long to tell you all,
 But while I mused came Memory with sad
 eyes,

Holding the folded annals of my youth;
 And while I mused, Love with knit brows
 went by,

240

And with a flying finger swept my lips,
 And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven
 Are those, who setting wide the doors that bar
 The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
 Let in the day.' Here, then, my words have
 end.

245

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells —
 Of that which came between, more sweet than
 each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
 That tremble round a nightingale — in sighs
 Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance, 250
 Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
 Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,
 And vows, where there was never need of
 vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above 255
 The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
 Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;

Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met 260
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing
wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent
On that veil'd picture — veil'd, for what it holds 265
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul;
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the time
Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart, 270
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought, 'I'll make them man and
wife.'

U O P M

98 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all, 5
 And yearn'd toward William; but the youth,
 because
 He had been always with her in the house,
 Thought not of Dora.

 Then there came a day
 When Allan called his son, and said, 'My son:
 I married late, but I would wish to see 10
 My grandchild on my knees before I die:
 And I have set my heart upon a match.
 Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
 To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
 She is my brother's daughter: he and I 15
 Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
 In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
 His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
 For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
 For many years.' But William answer'd short; 20
 'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
 I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man
 Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and
 said:
 'You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
 But in my time a father's word was law, 25
 And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
 Consider, William: take a month to think,
 And let me have an answer to my wish;

Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again.' 30
But William answer'd madly ; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house, 35
And hired himself to work within the fields ;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan
call'd

His niece and said : ' My girl, I love you well ; 40
But if you with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
' It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change !' 45

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William ; then distresses came on him ;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save, 50
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

100

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers 80
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said : ' Where were you yester-
day ? 85
Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ? '
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, ' This is William's child ! '
' And did I not,' said Allan, ' did I not
Forbid you, Dora ? ' Dora said again : 90
' Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone ! '
And Allan said, ' I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you ! 95
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well — for I will take the boy ;
But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell 100
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd
down

And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise 110
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, ' My uncle took the boy ;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :
He says that he will never see me more.'
Then answer'd Mary, ' This shall never be, 115
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home ; 120
And I will beg of him to take thee back :
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd 125
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw

The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks, ¹³⁰
Like one that loved him : and the lad stretch'd

out

And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in : but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her : ¹³⁵
And Allan set him down, and Mary said :

‘O Father !— if you let me call you so —
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child ; but now I come
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well. ¹⁴⁰
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me —
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus : ¹⁴⁵
“ God bless him ! ” he said, “ and may he never
know

The troubles I have gone thro' ! ” Then he
turn'd

His face and pass'd — unhappy that I am !
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight ¹⁵⁰
His father's memory ; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs : — 155
 ‘ I have been to blame — to blame. I have
 kill’d my son.
I have kill’d him—but I loved him—my dear son.
May God forgive me ! — I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.’

Then they clung about
The old man’s neck, and kiss’d him many times. 160
And all the man was broken with remorse ;
And all his love came back a hundredfold ;
And for three hours he sobb’d o’er William’s child
Thinking of William.

So those four abode
Within one house together ; and as years 165
Went forward, Mary took another mate ;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match’d with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not
me.

5

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink

Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those

That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

10

— Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;

— For always roaming with a hungry heart

? Much have I seen and known ; cities of men

— And manners, climates, councils, governments,

— Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;

15

— And drunk delight of battle with my peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met ;

Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'

Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin
fades

20

— For ever and for ever when I move.

— How dull it is to pause, to make an end,

— To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !

As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life

Were all too little, and of one to me

25

Little remains : but every hour is saved

From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things ; and vile it were

— For some three suns to store and hoard myself,

And this gray spirit yearning in desire

30

106 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil 35
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners, 45
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
with me —

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are
old ;

Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ; 50
Death closes all : but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:

The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs :
the deep 55
—Moans round with many voices. Come, my
friends,
---'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
Of all the western stars, until I die.
---It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
---It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
---And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho' 65
We are not now that strength which in old
days
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are,
we are ;
---One equal temper of heroic hearts,
---Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon :
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :
May my soul follow soon !

108 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

The shadows of the convent-towers 5
 Slant down the snowy sward,
 Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord :
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies, 10
 Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
 To yonder shining ground ;
 As this pale taper's earthly spark, 15
 To yonder argent round ;
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,
 My spirit before Thee ;
 So in mine earthly house I am,
 To that I hope to be. 20
 Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ; 25
 The flashes come and go ;
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,
 And strows her lights below,
 And deepens on and up ! the gates
 Roll back, and far within 30

For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea —
The Bridegroom with his bride !

35

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel.
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

5

10

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :

15

110 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

I never felt the kiss of love,
 Nor maiden's hand in mine. 20
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,
 Me mightier transports move and thrill;
 So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
 A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes, 25
 A light before me swims,
 Between dark stems the forest glows,
 I hear a noise of hymns :
 Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
 I hear a voice, but none are there ; 30
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings, 35
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark ;
 I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
 I float till all is dark. 40
 A gentle sound, an awful light !
 Three angels bear the holy Grail :
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.

Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God ! 45
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
 Thro' dreaming towns I go, 50
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
 The streets are dumb with snow.
 The tempest crackles on the leads,
 And, ringing, springs from brand and mail ;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads, 55
 And gilds the driving hail.
 I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
 No branchy thicket shelter yields :
 But blessed forms in whistling storms
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields. 60

A maiden knight — to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear ;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease, 65
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odours haunt my dreams :
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armour that I wear, 70

112 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls

A rolling organ-harmony

Swells up, and shakes and falls.

75

Then move the trees, the copses nod,

Wings flutter, voices hover clear:

'O just and faithful knight of God!

Ride on! the prize is near.'

80

So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;

By bridge and ford, by park and pale,

All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,

Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town

Met me walking on yonder way,

'And have you lost your heart?' she said:

'And are you married yet, Edward Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:

5

Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:

'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more

Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

1

‘ Ellen Adair she loved me well,
 Against her father’s and mother’s will : 10
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
 By Ellen’s grave, on the windy hill.

‘ Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;
 Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;
Fill’d I was with folly and spite, 15
 When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

‘ Cruel, cruel the words I said !
 Cruelly came they back to-day :
“ You’re too slight and fickle,” I said,
 “ To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.” 20

‘ There I put my face in the grass —
 Whisper’d, “ Listen to my despair ;
I repent me of all I did :
 Speak a little, Ellen Adair ! ”

‘ Then I took a pencil and wrote 25
 On the mossy stone, as I lay,
“ Here lies the body of Ellen Adair,
 And here the heart of Edward Gray ! ”

‘ Love may come, and love may go,
 And, fly like a bird, from tree to tree : 30
But I will love no more, no more,
 Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

' Bitterly wept I over the stone :
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :
 There lies the body of Ellen Adair !
 And there the heart of Edward Gray ! '

35

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

IN her ear he whispers gaily,
 ' If my heart by signs can tell,
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
 And I think thou lov'st me well.'
 She replies, in accents fainter,
 ' There is none I love like thee.'
 He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
 He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof:
 Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father's roof.
 ' I can make no marriage present :
 Little can I give my wife.
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,
 And I love thee more than life.'
 They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand :
 Summer woods, about them blowing,
 Made a murmur in the land.

5
10
15
20

From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
 'Let us see these handsome houses
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'
 So she goes by him attended, 25
 Hears him lovingly converse,
 Sees whatever fair and splendid
 Lay betwixt his home and hers;
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great, 30
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,
 Built for pleasure and for state.
 All he shows her makes him dearer :
 Evermore she seems to gaze
 On that cottage growing nearer, 35
 Where they twain will spend their days.
 O but she will love him truly !
 He shall have a cheerful home ;
 She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come. 40
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns
 With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns;
 Sees a mansion more majestic 45
 Than all those she saw before :
 Many a gallant gay domestic
 Bows before him at the door.

And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call, 50
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly, 55
‘All of this is mine and thine.’
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he. 60
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin :
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over 65
Pale again as death did prove :
But he clasp’d her like a lover,
And he cheer’d her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho’ at times her spirit sank : 70
Shaped her heart with woman’s meekness
To all duties of her rank :
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady, 75
And the people loved her much.

But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honour
 Unto which she was not born. 80
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
 And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he
 Were once more that landscape-painter,
 Which did win my heart from me !'
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him, 85
 Fading slowly from his side :
 Three fair children first she bore him,
 Then before her time she died.
 Weeping, weeping late and early,
 Walking up and pacing down, 90
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her,
 And he look'd at her and said,
 'Bring the dress and put it on her, 95
 That she wore when she was wed.'
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body, drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest. 100

THE VOYAGE

I.

WE left behind the painted buoy
 That tosses at the harbour-mouth :
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,
 As fast we fled to the South :
 How fresh was every sight and sound 5
 On open main or winding shore !
 We knew the merry world was round,
 And we might sail for evermore.

II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail : 10
 The Lady's-head upon the prow
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
 And swept behind : so quick the run,
 We felt the good ship shake and reel, 15
 We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
 And burn the threshold of the night,
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light ! 20

How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

IV.

New stars all night above the brim 25
Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field, 30
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield:

V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes 35
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove. 40

VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine

With ashy rains, that spreading made
 Fantastic plume or sable pine;
By sands and steaming flats, and floods 45
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark! 50
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark:
At times a carven craft would shoot
 From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit, 55
 But we nor paused for fruits nor flowers.

VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled
 Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
 In hope to gain upon her flight. 60
Her face was evermore unseen,
 And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmur'd 'O my Queen,
 I follow till I make thee mine.'

The Voyage

121

IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd 65
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea, 70
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

X.

And only one among us — him
We pleased not — he was seldom pleased :
He saw not far : his eyes were dim : 75
But ours he swore were all diseased.
'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,
'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept. 80

XI.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;
We loved the glories of the world ;
But laws of nature were our scorn ;
For blasts would rise and rave and cease, 85
But whence were those that drove the sail

Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and thro' the counter-gale ?

XII.

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led :
Now mate is blind and captain lame
And half the crew are sick or dead.
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before :
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore.

90

95

THE VISION OF SIN

I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late :
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have
 flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise :
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips —
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,

5

10

Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and
 capes —
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles
 of grapes.

II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
 Gathering up from all the lower ground ; 15
 Narrowing in to where they sat assembled,
 Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
 Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
 Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ; 20
 Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;
 Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;
 Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ; 25
 Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
 As 't were a hundred-throated nightingale,
 The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and
 palpitated ;
 Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles, 30
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
 Flung the torrent rainbow round :
 Then they started from their places,

Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces, 35
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces, 40
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew :
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky. 45

III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn, 50
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing
near,
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken, 55
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was
broken,

When that cold vapour touch'd the palace
gate,
And link'd again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death, 60
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

IV.

' Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !
Here is custom come your way ;
Take my brute, and lead him in, 65
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

' Bitter barmaid, waning fast !
See that sheets are on my bed ;
What ! the flower of life is past :
It is long before you wed. 70

' Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath !
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

' I am old, but let me drink ; 75
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

126 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

- ‘ Wine is good for shrivell’d lips,
 When a blanket wraps the day,
 When the rotten woodland drips,
 And the leaf is stamp’d in clay. 80
- ‘ Sit thee down, and have no shame,
 Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
 What care I for any name ? 85
 What for order or degree ?
- ‘ Let me screw thee up a peg :
 Let me loose thy tongue with wine :
 Callest thou that thing a leg ?
 Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ? 90
- ‘ Thou shalt not be saved by works :
 Thou hast been a sinner too :
 Ruin’d trunks on wither’d forks,
 Empty scarecrows, I and you !
- ‘ Fill the cup, and fill the can : 95
 Have a rouse before the morn :
 Every moment dies a man,
 Every moment one is born.
- ‘ We are men of ruin’d blood ;
 Therefore comes it we are wise. 100
 Fish are we that love the mud,
 Rising to no fancy-flies.

‘ Name and fame ! to fly sublime
Thro’ the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time, 105
Banded by the hands of fools.

‘ Friendship ! — to be two in one —
Let the canting liar pack !
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back. 110

‘ Virtue ! — to be good and just —
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix’d with cunning sparks of hell.

‘ O ! we two as well can look 115
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbour’s wife.

‘ Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn : 120
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

‘ Drink, and let the parties rave :
They are fill’d with idle spleen ;
Rising, falling, like a wave, 125
For they know not what they mean.

128 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

‘ He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant’s power ;
And the tyrant’s cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour. 130

‘ Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

‘ Greet her with applausive breath, 135
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

‘ No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house : 140
And I think we knew the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

‘ Let her go ! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes 145
On the first-born of her sons.

‘ Drink to lofty hopes that cool —
Visions of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate. 150

The Vision of Sin

129

‘Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

' Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ; 155
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

' Change, reverting to the years,
 When thy nerves could understand 160
 What there is in loving tears,
 And the warmth of hand in hand.

' Tell me tales of thy first love —
 April hopes, the fools of chance;
 Till the graves begin to move,
 And the dead begin to dance.

165

‘ Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again. 170

**‘Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !**

130 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

‘ You are bones, and what of that? 175
 Every face, however full,
 Padded round with flesh and fat,
 Is but modell’d on a skull.

‘ Death is king, and Vivat Rex! 180
 Tread a measure on the stones,
 Madam — if I know your sex,
 From the fashion of your bones.

‘ No, I cannot praise the fire
 In your eye — nor yet your lip:
 All the more do I admire 185
 Joints of cunning workmanship.

‘ Lo! God’s likeness — the ground-plan —
 Neither modell’d, glazed, nor framed:
 Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
 Far too naked to be shamed! 190

‘ Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
 While we keep a little breath!
 Drink to heavy Ignorance!
 Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

‘ Thou art mazed, the night is long, 195
 And the longer night is near:
 What! I am not all as wrong
 As a bitter jest is dear.

‘ Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
 When the locks are crisp and curl’d ; 200
 Unto me my maudlin gall
 And my mockeries of the world.

‘ Fill the cup, and fill the can :
 Mingle madness, mingle scorn !
 Dregs of life, and lees of man : 205
 Yet we will not die forlorn.’

V.

The voice grew faint : there came a further
 change :

Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range :
 Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
 And slowly quickening into lower forms ; 210
 By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
 Old plash of rains, and refuse patch’d with
 moss.

Then some one spake : ‘ Behold ! it was a crime
 Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.’
 Another said : ‘ The crime of sense became 215
 The crime of malice, and is equal blame.’
 And one : ‘ He had not wholly quench’d his
 power ;

A little grain of conscience made him sour.’
 At last I heard a voice upon the slope
 Cry to the summit, ‘ Is there any hope ? ’ 220

To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
 But in a tongue no man could understand;
 And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

BREAK, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at play!
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the bill;
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead
 Will never come back to me.

5

10.

15

THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY.

1847

SONGS

The Falling Out.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears. 5
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child 10
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

Lullaby.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,

134 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go, 5
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me;
 While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon; 10
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon: 15
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Bugle Song.

The splendour falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying, 5
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing! 10

is made
tetrameter

German

Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dy-
ing.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :
Our echoes roll from soul to soul, 15
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Idle Tears.
'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair,
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more. 5

' Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. 10

' Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes

136 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;

So sad, so strange, the days that are no more. 15

‘ Dear as remember’d kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign’d
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.’ 20

North and South.

‘ O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

‘ O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest
each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South, 5
And dark and true and tender is the North.

‘ O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and
light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

‘ O were I thou that she might take me in, 10
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

‘ Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with
love,

Delaying as the tender ash delays

To clothe herself, when all the woods are green? 15

‘ O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown :
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

‘ O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North, 20
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

‘ O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her
mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.’

. The Call to War.

Thy voice is heard thro’ rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands ;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands :
A moment, while the trumpets blow, 5
He sees his brood about thy knee ;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

The Call to Life.

Home they brought her warrior dead :
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :
 All her maidens, watching, said,
 'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,
 Truest friend and noblest foe ;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

5

Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior stept,
 Took the face-cloth from the face ;
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

10

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee —
 Like summer tempest came her tears —
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

15

**MALE AND FEMALE CREATED
 HE THEM.**

'THE woman's cause is man's ; they rise or sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free :
 For she that out of Lethe scales with man

The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
His nights, his days, moves with him to one
goal, 5
Stays all this fair young planet in her hands —
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow? but work no more
alone!
Our place is much: as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aiding her — 10
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up but drag her down —
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her — let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be 15
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference. 20
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the
world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care, 25
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;

140 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers, 30
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
 Distinct in individualities,

But like each other ev'n as those who love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men : 35
 Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and
 calm :

Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
 May these things be !'

Sighing she spoke ' I fear
 They will not.'

' Dear, but let us type them now
 In our own lives, and this proud watchword
 rest

40

Of equal ; seeing either sex alone
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
 Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils
 Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow, 45
 The single pure and perfect animal,
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full
 stroke,
 Life.'

And again sighing she spoke : ' A dream
 That once was mine ! what woman taught you
 this ? '

‘ Alone,’ I said, ‘ from earlier than I know, 50
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
 I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
 Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
 Or keeps his wing’d affections clipt with crime : 55
 Yet was there one thro’ whom I loved her, one
 Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
 No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
 In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise, 60
 Interpreter between the Gods and men,
 Who look’d all native to her place, and yet
 On tiptoe seem’d to touch upon a sphere
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
 Sway’d to her from their orbits as they moved, 65
 And girdled her with music. Happy he
 With such a mother ! faith in womankind
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
 Comes easy to him, and tho’ he trip and fall
 He shall not blind his soul with clay.’ 70

The Princess, VII.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

1852

I.

BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty
nation,

Mourning when their leaders fall,

Warriors carry the warrior's pall,

And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?

Here, in streaming London's central roar.

Let the sound of those he wrought for,

And the feet of those he fought for,

Echo round his bones for evermore.

1. 1852, 1853: *Let us bury, etc.*

5, 6. 1852:

When laurel-garlanded leaders fall,
And warriors, etc.

9. In 1852, not present; in 1853, two lines:

He died on Walmer's lonely shore,
But here, etc.

Ode on the Death of Wellington 143

III.

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go, 15
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow ;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past. 20
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute, 25
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war, 30
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.

20. 1852 : Our sorrow draws but on the golden Past.

27. 1852 : *largest* influence,

28. 1852 : *freest* from ambitious

144 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

O good gray head which all men knew, 35
 O voice from which their omens all men drew,
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,
 O fall'n at length that tower of strength
 Which stood four-square to all the winds that
 blew !
 Such was he whom we deplore. 40
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
 The great World-victor's victor will be seen no
 more.

V.

All is over and done :
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 England, for thy son. 45
 Let the bell be toll'd.
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 And render him to the mould.
 Under the cross of gold
 That shines over city and river, 50
 There he shall rest for ever
 Among the wise and the bold.
 Let the bell be toll'd :
 And a reverent people behold
 The towering car, the sable steeds : 55
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
 Dark in its funeral fold.

56. 1852-1855 : his blazon'd, etc.

Ode on the Death of Wellington 145

Let the bell be toll'd :
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd 60
Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom 65
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim 70
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name, 75
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI.

Who is he that cometh like an honour'd guest, 80
With banner and with music, with soldier and
with priest,

59. Added in 1853. *And* inserted in 1855.

79. 1852-1855. ever-ringing avenues, etc.

146 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

With a nation weeping, and breaking on my
rest ?

Mighty Seaman, this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea.

Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man, 85

The greatest sailor since our world began.

Now, to the roll of muffled drums,

To thee the greatest soldier comes ;

For this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea ;

90

His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;

O give him welcome, this is he

Worthy of our gorgeous rites,

And worthy to be laid by thee ;

For this is England's greatest son,

95

He that gain'd a hundred fights,

Nor ever lost an English gun ;

91-113. 1855 :

His martial wisdom kept us free ;

O warrior-seaman, this is he,

This is England's greatest son,

Worthy of our gorgeous rites,

And worthy to be laid by thee ;

He that gain'd a hundred fights,

And never lost an English gun ;

He that in his later day

Against the myriads of Assaye

Clash'd with his fiery few and won :

And underneath another sun

Made the soldier, led him on,

And ever great and greater grew,

Beating from the wasted vines

All their marshals' bandit swarms

Back to France with countless blows ;

Till their host of eagles flew

Past the Pyrenean pines, etc.

Ode on the Death of Wellington 147

This is he that far away
 Against the myriads of Assaye
 Class'd with his fiery few and won ; 100
 And underneath another sun,
 Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works, the vast designs
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines, 105
 Where he greatly stood at bay,
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms, 110
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Follow'd up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men, 115
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings, 120
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
 On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;
 A day of onsets of despair !

101. 1852 : a nearer sun, 113. 1855 : Past the etc.

148 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Dash'd on every rocky square 125
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
 Thro' the long-tormented air
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
 And down we swept and charged and over-
 threw. 130

So great a soldier taught us there,
 What long-enduring hearts could do
 In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile, 135
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
 If aught of things that here befall
 Touch a spirit among things divine,
 If love of country move thee there at all, 140
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !
 And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
 In full acclaim,
 A people's voice,
 The proof and echo of all human fame, 145
 A people's voice, when they rejoice
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 Attest their great commander's claim
 With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
 Eternal honour to his name. 150

133. Till 1875, world's earthquake.

Ode on the Death of Wellington 149

VII.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers, 155
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it
ours.

And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul 160
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings; 165
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be
just.

154, 155. Added in 1853: 1853 and 1855, His Saxon

157. 1852: Of most unbounded reverence and regret

1853: Of boundless reverence and regret

159. Added in 1853.

166. 1852: For, saving that, ye save mankind

168. 1852: And help the march of human mind

169. 1852: Till crowds be sane and crowns be just.

150 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

But wink no more in slothful overtrust. 170
 Remember him who led your hosts ;
 He bad you guard the sacred coasts.
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall ;
 His voice is silent in your council-hall
 For ever ; and whatever tempests lour 175
 For ever silent ; even if they broke
 In thunder, silent ; yet remember all
 He spoke among you and the Man who spoke ;
 Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ; 180
 Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
 Thro' either babbling world of high and low ;
 Whose life was work, whose language rife
 With rugged maxims hewn from life ;
 Who never spoke against a foe ; 185
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
 All great self-seekers trampling on the right :
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named ;

170. 1852 : These lines followed :

Perchance our greatness will increase ;
 Perchance a darkening future yields
 Some reverse from worse to worse,
 The blood of men in quiet fields,
 And sprinkled on the sheaves of peace.

171. 1852 : And O remember

172. 1852 : Respect his sacred warning ; guard your coasts :

1853 : Revere his warning : guard your coasts.

173. Added in 1853. 181, 182. Added in 1855.

183, 184. Added in 1853. 185. Added in 1855.

186. 1852 : His eighty etc.

Ode on the Death of Wellington 151

Truth-lover was our English Duke ;
Whatever record leap to light 190
He never shall be shamed.

VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands 195
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state. 200
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes, 205
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory : 210
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,

Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled 215
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he : his work is done.

But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand

Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure :
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearths he saved from
shame

For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him. 230
Eternal honour to his name.

IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see :
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee

218-226. 1852:

He has not fail'd : he hath prevail'd :
So let the men whose hearths he saved from shame
'Thro' many and many an age proclaim

Ode on the Death of Wellington 153

Late the little children clung :
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung. 240
Ours the pain, be his the gain !
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere ; 245
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane : 250
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true 255
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill

241. Added in 1853.

251-255. 1852 :

For solemn, too, this day are we.
O friends, we doubt not that for one so true.

254. 1853 :

Lifted up in heart are we.

259-261. Added in 1853.

154 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

And break the shore, and evermore 260
 Make and break, and work their will;
 Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
 Round us, each with different powers,
 And other forms of life than ours,
 What know we greater than the soul? 265
 On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's
 ears:
 The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and
 tears:
 The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; 270
 He is gone who seem'd so great. —
 Gone; but nothing can bereave him
 Of the force he made his own
 Being here, and we believe him
 Something far advanced in State, 275
 And that he wears a truer crown
 Than any wreath that man can weave him.
 Speak no more of his renown,
 Lay your earthly fancies down,
 And in the vast cathedral leave him. 280
 God accept him, Christ receive him.

262. 1852-1855: worlds on worlds

266-270. Added in 1853. 267. 1853: March sounds

271. 1852: The man 278. 1852-1853: But speak

NORTHERN FARMER.

OLD STYLE.

I.

WHEER 'ast a beän saw long and meä liggin'
'ere aloän?

Noorse? thourt nowt o' a noorse: whoy, Doc-
tor 's abeän an' agoän:

Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle: but I
beänt a fool:

Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to breäk
my rule.

II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's
nawways true:

Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that
a do.

I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I
beän 'ere,

An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for
foorty year.

III.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o'
my bed.

' The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my
friend, a said,

10. ou as in hour.

5

10

156 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

An' a tow'd ma my sins, an' s' toithe were due,
an' I gied it in hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the
lond.

IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch
to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's
barne.
Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squire an'
choorch an' staäte, 15
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin
the raäte.

V.

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor moy
Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-
clock ower my 'eäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt
a 'ad summut to säy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I
coom'd awaäy. 20

VI.

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to
meä.
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un,
sheä.

'Siver, I kep' um, I kep' um, my lass, tha mun
understond ;
I done moy duty boy um as I 'a done boy the lond.

VII.

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it
eäsy an' freeä 25
' The amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my
friend,' says 'eä.
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said
it in 'aäste :
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a
stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

VIII.

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass ? naw, naw,
tha was not born then ;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'cärd 'um mysen ; 30
Moäst loike a butter-bump, fur I 'cärd 'um about
an' about,
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved
an' rembled 'um out.

IX.

Keäper's it wur ; fo' they fun' um theer a-laäid
of 'is faäce.
Down i' the woild 'enemies afoor I coom'd to
the plaäce.

158 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Noäks or Thimbleby — toäner 'ed shot 'um as
deäd as a naäil. 35
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'solze — but
git ma my aäle.

X

Dubbut looök at the waäste : theer warn't not
feeäd for a cow ;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at
it now —
Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots
of feeäd,
Fourscoor yows upon it an' some on it down
I' seeäd. 40

XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a
stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff
it an' all,
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an'
lond o' my oän.

XII

Do godamoighty knaw what a 's doing a-taäkin'
ò' meä? 45
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a
peä ;

35. One or other.

40. ou as in hour.

40. Clover.

An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squire coom Michaelmas
thutty year.

XIII.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joānes, as' ant not a
'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a niver
mended a fence: 50
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke
ma now
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby
hoälms to plow!

XIV.

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma
a passin' boy,
Says to thessén naw doubt ' what a man a beä
sewer-loy !'
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squire sin fust
a coom'd to the 'All; 55
I done moy duty by Squire an' I done moy
duty boy hall.

XV.

Squire 's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull
'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot
muddles ma quoit;

160 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to
 Joānes,
 Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver rembles
 the stoāns.

60

XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is
 kittle o' steām
 Huzzin' an' maāzin' the blessed feālds wi' the
 Divl's oān teām.
 Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says
 is sweet,
 But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn
 abeār to see it.

XVII.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma
 the aāle?
 Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an' a's hallus i' the
 owd taāle;
 I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw
 moor nor a floy;
 Git ma my aāle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I
 mun doy.

65

THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine ;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbìà show'd **5**
In ruin, by the mountain road;
How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches 15
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove, 20

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most, 25
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;
But distant colour, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast.

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green ;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head. 35

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old. 40

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours ;
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete, 45
 Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
 Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
 Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
 Remember what a plague of rain ; 50
 Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;
 At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
 Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;
 Porch-pillars on the lion resting, 55
 And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
 The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
 The height, the space, the gloom, the glory !
 A mount of marble, a hundred spires ! 60

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
 Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
 I stood among the silent statues,
 And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair, 65
 Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
 A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
 And snowy dells in a golden air.

164 **Select Poems of Tennyson**

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast 70
 Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
 The rich Virgilian rustic measure 75
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on the Lariano crept
 To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept; 80

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
 The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu, 85
And up the snowy Splugen drew,
 But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy. 90
 O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold:

Yet here to-night in this dark city, 95
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nursling of another sky

Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by : 100

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,

The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain, 105
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,

Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

WILL.

I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :

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For him nor moves the loud world's random
 mock,
 Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound, 5
 Who seems a promontory of rock,
 That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
 In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
 Tempest-buffed, citadel-crown'd.

II.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time, 10
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
 And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
 Or seeming-genial venial fault, *excusable*
 Recurring and suggesting still!
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt 15
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,
 And o'er a weary, sultry land,
 Far beneath a blazing vault,
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt. 20

WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of
 song,
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an
 endless sea —

Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right

the wrong —

Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover, of

glory she:

Give her the glory of going on, and still to be. 5

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of

Virtue be dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the life

of the worm and the fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats

of the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a

summer sky:

Give her the wages of going on, and not to die. 10.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills
and the plains —

Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who
reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' he be not that which
He seems?

Dreams are true while they last, and do we not
live in dreams?

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Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and
limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division
from Him ?

Dark is the world to thee : thyself art the reason
why ;
For is He not all but that which has power to
feel 'I am I !'

Glory about thee, without thee : d thou ful-
fillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splen-
dour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with
Spirit can meet —
Closer is He than breathing, and ~~nearer~~ ^{closer} than
hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise ; O Soul, and let us
rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet
His voice.

Law is God, say some : no God ~~at all~~ ^{at all} ~~say~~
the fool ;
For all we have power to see is a str ~~...~~ ^{...}
bent in a pool ;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye
of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision —
were it not He?

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

1850.

Love Victorious.

STRONG SON of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

5

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

10

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

15

Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they. 20

We have but faith : we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we see ;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more, 25
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
We mock thee when we do not fear : 30
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;
What seem'd my worth since I began ;
For merit lives from man to man, 35
And not from man, O Lord to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved. 40

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Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
 Confusions of a wasted youth ;
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

Proem.

The Friend, the Heart of All Things.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal ;
 O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human, divine ;
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye ;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be ;
 Loved deeper, darker understood ;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

cxxxix.

Burial at Clevedon.

The Danube to the Severn gave
 The darken'd heart that beat no more ;
 They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ; 5
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
 And hush'd my deepest grief of all, 10
 When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
 My deeper anguish also falls, 15
And I can speak a little then.

xix.

College Re-visited.

I past beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown ;
 I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes 5
 The storm their high-built organs make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes ;

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And caught once more the distant shout,
 The measured pulse of racing oars 10
 Among the willows ; paced the shores
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same ; and last
 Up that long walk of limes I past 15
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :
 I lingered ; all within was noise
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
 That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ; 20

Where once we held debate, a band
 Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
 And labour, and the changing mart,
 And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair, 25
 But send it slackly from the string ;
 And one would pierce an outer ring,
 And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A willing ear 30
 We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw 35
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo. 40
lxxxviii.

Holidays at Somersby.

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright ;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down 5
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
He mixt in all our simple sports ; 10
They pleased him fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark
 The landscape winking thro' the heat : 15

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
 The gust that round the garden flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears ! 20

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon 25
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp and flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray, 30
 And break the livelong summer day
 With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
 Discuss'd the books to love or hate,

Or touch'd the changes of the state, 35
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down, 40

' And merge ' he said ' in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ; 45
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil 50
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

lxxxix.

The Friend's Character.

Heart-Affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry ;

The Friend's Eloquence.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years :
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung, 5
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school 10
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;
And loved them more, that they were
thine, 15
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will. 20

Gentleman Defined.

The churl in spirit, up or down
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
 To him who grasps a golden ball,
 By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil 5
 His want in forms for fashion's sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories call, 10
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower 15
 And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an eye,
 Where God and Nature met in light ; 20

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan;
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

cxi.

The Friend's Letters.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd: 5
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes 10
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at
ease, 15
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

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But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and night,
 And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

20

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
 Of that glad year which once had been,
 In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

25

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward back,
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

30

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the past,
 And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

35

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

40

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time — the shocks of Chance —
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame 45
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease, 50
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And, suck'd from out the distant gloom,
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore, 55
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said, 60

' The dawn, the dawn,' and died away ;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

Nature Pitiless.

'So careful of the type?' but no.
 From scarped cliff and quarried stone
 She cries, 'A thousand types are gone :
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me :
 I bring to life, I bring to death :
 The spirit does but mean the breath :
 I know no more.' And he, shall he,

5

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

10

Who trusted God was love indeed
 And love Creation's final law —
 Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

15

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

20

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail! 25
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

lnd.

The Heart's Revolt.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun, 5
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep, 10
I heard a voice 'believe no more'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

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A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

15

No, like a child in doubt and fear :
But that blind clamour made me wise ;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near ;

20

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands ;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

cxix.

The Goal of Ill.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;

5

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire 10
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all, 15
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry. 20
liv.

The Larger Hope.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife, 5
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds, 10
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar stairs 15
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope. 20
iv.

God, Nature and the Friend.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess; 5
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before ;
My love is vaster passion now ; 10
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
I have thee still, and I rejoice ;
I prosper, circled with thy voice ; 15
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

cxix.

Supplicatio.

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust 5
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved 10
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

cxli.

MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS.

1855.

THE HAPPY LOVER.

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good. 5

II.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once
more ; 10
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is
gone.

III.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.

The happy Lober

191

O, art thou sighing for Lebanon 15
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious
 East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed 20
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread 25
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom
 she came.

IV.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day 30
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand 35
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,

Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

40

V.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl. 45

VI.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me 50
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII.

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs, 55
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here 60
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more
dear.'

VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?
 And hark the clock within, the silver knell
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white, 65
 And died to live, long as my pulses play ;
 But now by this my love has closed her sight
 And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
 To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
 Among the fragments of the golden day. 70
 May nothing there her maiden grace affright !
 Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
 My bride to be, my evermore delight,
 My own heart's heart, my ownest own, fare-
 well ;

It is but for a little space I go : 75
 And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
 Beat to the noiseless music of the night !
 Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
 Of your soft splendours that you look so bright ?
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell. 80
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
 Beat with my heart more blest than heart can
 tell,

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
 That seems to draw — but it shall not be so :
 Let all be well, be well. 85

BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS.

1880.

RIZPAH.

17—.

I.

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land
and sea —

And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother,
come out to me.'

Why should he call me to-night when he knows
that I cannot go?

For the downs are as bright as day, and the
full moon stares at the snow.

II.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy
us out of the town.

The loud black nights for us, and the storm
rushing over the down,

When I cannot see my own hand, but am led
by the creak of the chain,

And grovel and grope for my son till I find my-
self drenched with the rain.

III.

Anything fallen again? nay — what was there
left to fall?

I have taken them home, I have number'd the
bones, I have hidden them all. 10

What am I saying? and what are *you*? do you
come as a spy?

Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree
falls so must it lie.

IV.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you
— what have you heard?

Why did you sit so quiet? you never have
spoken a word.

O — to pray with me — yes — a lady — none
of their spies. 15

But the night has crept into my heart, and be-
gun to darken my eyes.

V.

Ah — you, that have lived so soft, what should
you know of the night,

The blast and the burning shame and the bitter
frost and the fright?

I have done it, while you were asleep — you
were only made for the day.

I have gather'd my baby together — and now
you may go your way. 20

VI.

Nay — for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit by
an old dying wife.

But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an
hour of life.

I kiss'd my boy in the prison before he went
out to die.

'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he never
has told me a lie.

I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when
he was but a child —

'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said; he
was always so wild —

And idle — and could n't be idle — my Willy —
he never could rest.

The King should have made him a soldier, he
would have been one of his best.

25

VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they
never would let him be good;

They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and
he swore that he would,

And he took no life, but he took one purse, and
when all was done

He flung it among his fellows — I'll none of
it, said my son.

30

VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers.
 I told them my tale,
 God's own truth — but they kill'd him, they
 kill'd him for robbing the mail.
 They hang'd him in chains for a show — we
 had always borne a good name. 35
 To be hang'd for a thief — and then put away
 — is n't that enough shame?
 Dust to dust — low down — let us hide! but
 they set him so high
 That all the ships of the world could stare at
 him, passing by.
 God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible
 fowls of the air,
 But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd
 him and hang'd him there. 40

IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him
 my last goodbye;
 They had fasten'd the door of his cell. 'O
 mother!' I heard him cry.
 I could n't get back tho' I tried, he had some-
 thing further to say,
 And now I never shall know it. The jailer
 forced me away.

X.

Then since I could n't but hear that cry of my
boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up : they fasten'd 45
me down on my bed.
' Mother, O mother ! ' — he call'd in the dark
to me year after year —
They beat me for that, they beat me — you
know that I could n't but hear ;
And then at the last they found I had grown so
stupid and still
They let me abroad again — but the creatures
had worked their will. 50

XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my
bone was left —
I stole them all from the lawyers — and you,
will you call it a theft ? —
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the
bones that had laughed and had cried —
Theirs ? O no ! they are mine — not theirs —
they had moved in my side.

XII.

Do you think I was scared by the bones ? I
kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all — 55
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the night, by the
churchyard wall.

My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet
of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him
in holy ground.

XIII.

They would scratch him up — they would hang
him again on the cursed tree.

Sin? O yes — we are sinners I know — let all
that be, 60

And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good
will toward men —

' Full of compassion and mercy the Lord' —
let me hear it again ;

' Full of compassion and mercy — long-suffer-
ing.' Yes, O yes !

For the lawyer is born but to murder — the
Saviour lives but to bless.

He 'll never put on the black cap except for the
worst of the worst, 65

And the first may be last — I have heard it in
church — and the last may be first.

Suffering — O long-suffering — yes, as the Lord
must know,

Year after year in the mist and the wind and
the shower and the snow.

XIV.

Heard, have you ? what ? they have told you
 he never repented his sin.
 How do they know it ? are *they* his mother ? are
 you of his kin ? 7.
 Heard ! have you ever heard, when the storm on
 the downs began,
 The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea
 that 'ill moan like a man ?

XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation — it's all
 very well.
 But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not
 find him in Hell.
 For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord
 has look'd into my care, 75
 And he means me I'm sure to be happy with
 Willy, I know not where.

XVI.

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul, that is
 all your desire :
 Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy
 be gone to the fire ?
 I have been with God in the dark — go, go, you
 may leave me alone —
 You never have borne a child — you are just as
 hard as a stone. 80

The Revenge

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XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you
mean to be kind,

But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's
voice in the wind —

The snow and the sky so bright — he used but
to call in the dark,

And he calls me now from the church and not
from the gibbet — for hark!

Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is coming
— shaking the walls —

Willy — the moon's in a cloud — Good-night.
I am going. He calls.

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THE REVENGE.

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

I.

AT Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville
lay,

And a pinnacle, like a flutter'd bird, came flying
from far away:

'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted
fifty-three!'

Then swore Lord Thomas Howard: 'Fore
God I am no coward;

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But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are
out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but
follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with
fifty-three ?

II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know
you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them
again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying
sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them,
my lord Howard;
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of
Spain.'

III.

So Lord Howard passed away with five ships
of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer
heaven:
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men
from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;

For we brought them all on board,
 And they blest him in their pain, that they were
 not left to Spain, 20
 To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the
 glory of the Lord.

IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship
 and to fight,
 And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard
 came in sight,
 With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the
 weather bow.
 'Shall we fight or shall we fly?' 25
 Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
 For to fight is but to die!
 There'll be little of us left by the time this sun
 be set.'

And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good
 English men.
 Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children
 of the devil, 30
 For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil
 yet.'

V.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd
 a hurrah, and so
 The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart
 of the foe,

With her hundred fighters on deck, and her
 ninetv sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to
 the left were seen
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long
 sea-lane between. 35

VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from
 their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock of the
 mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fif-
 teen hundred tons, 40
And upshadowing high above us with her yawn-
 ing tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII.

And while now the great San Philip hung above
 us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud, 45
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the
 starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought of
 herself and went 50
 Having that within her womb that had left her
 ill content;
 And the rest they came aboard us, and they
 fought us hand to hand,
 For a dozen times they came with their pikes
 and musketeers,
 And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog
 that shakes his ears
 When he leaps from the water to the land. 55

IX.

And the sun went down and the stars came out
 far over the summer sea,
 But never a moment ceased the fight of the one
 and the fifty-three.
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-
 built galleons came,
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her
 battle-thunder and flame;
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back
 with her dead and her shame. 60
 For some were sunk and many were shatter'd,
 and so could fight us no more —
 God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the
 world before?

X.

For he said ' Fight on ! fight on ! '
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck ;
And it chanced that, when half of the short
summer night was gone, 65
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the
deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it sud-
denly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side
and the head,
And he said ' Fight on ! fight on ! '

XI.

And the night went down, and the sun smiled
out far over the summer sea, 70
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay
round us all in a ring ;
But they dared not touch us again, for they
fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we, 75
Seeing forty of our poor hundred slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desper-
ate strife ;
And the sick men down in the hold were most
of them stark and cold,

And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the
 powder was all of it spent ; 80
 And the masts and the rigging were lying over
 the side ;
 But Sir Richard cried in his English pride
 ‘ We have fought such a fight for a day and a
 night
 As may never be fought again !
 We have won great glory, my men ! 85
 And a day less or more
 At sea or ashore,
 We die — does it matter when ?
 Sink me the ship, master Gunner — sink her,
 split her in twain !
 Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands
 of Spain ! ’ 90

XII.

And the gunner said, ‘ Ay, ay,’ but the seamen
 made reply :
 ‘ We have children, we have wives
 And the Lord hath spared our lives.
 We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield,
 to let us go ;
 We shall live to fight again and to strike another
 blow.’ 95
 And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to
 the foe.

XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship
bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Rich-
ard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their
courtly foreign grace ;
But he rose upon their decks and he cried : 100
' I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant
man and true ;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to
do :
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville
die !'
And he fell upon their decks and he died.

XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had been so
valiant and true, 105
And had holden the power and glory of Spain
so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his
English few ;
Was he devil or man ? He was devil for aught
they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into
the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier
alien crew, 110

And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd
for her own ;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd
awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather
to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale
blew
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an
earthquake grew, 115
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and
their masts and their flags
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-
shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by
the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

TIRESIAS AND OTHER POEMS.

1885.

THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS.

I.

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess ! for it mun be
the time about now
When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end close
wi' her paäils fro' the cow.
Eh ! tha be new to the plaäce — thou 'rt gaäpin'
— does n't tha see
I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was sweet
upo' me ?

II.

Naäy to be sewer it be past 'er time. What
maäkes 'er sa laäte ?
Goä to the laäne at the back, an' looök thruf
Maddison's gaäte !

III.

Sweet-arts ! Molly belike may 'a lighted to-
night upo' one.
Sweet-arts ! thanks to the Lord that I niver not
listen'd to noän !

Soä I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my oän kettle
 theere o' the hob,
 An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the second,
 an' Steevie an' Rob. 10

IV.

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou sees
 that i' spite o' the men
 I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two 'oondred
 a-year to mysen ;
 Yis ! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony lass
 i' the Sheere ;
 An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but Robby I seed
 thruf ya theree.

V.

Feyther 'ud say I wur ugly es sin, an' I beänt
 not vaäin, 15
 But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw soom
 'ud 'a thowt ma plaäin,
 An' I was n't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons, ye said I
 wur pretty i' pinks,
 An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt sich a
 fool as ye thinks ;
 Ye was stroäkin' ma down wi' the 'air, as I be
 a-stroäkin o' you,
 But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I wur sewer
 that it could n't be true ; 20

Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye know'd it wur
 pleasant to 'ear,
 Thaw it war n't not me es wur pretty, but my
 two 'oondred a-year.

VI.

D' ya mind the murnin' when we was a walkin'
 together, an' stood
 By the claäy'd-ooop pond, that the foälk be so
 scared at, i' Gigglesby wood,
 Wheer the poor wench drowndid hersen, black
 Sal, es 'ed been disgraäced? 25
 An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a-creeäpin
 about my waäist;
 An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's gittin'
 ower fond,
 I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt foot fust
 i' the pond;
 And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well, as I
 did that daäy,
 Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt my feet
 wi' a flop fro' the claäy. 30
 Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy taäil,
 tha may gie ma a kiss,
 Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam an' wur
 niver sa' nigh saäyin' Yis.
 But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was shaämed
 to cross Gigglesby Greeän,

Fur a cat may looök at a king tha knaws but the
cat mun be cleän.
Sa we boäth on us kep out o' sight o' the win-
ders o' Gigglesby Hinn — 35
Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet! they pricks
cleän thruf to the skin —
An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brokken shed
i' the laäne at the back,
Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once, an' tha
runn'd oop o' the thack;
An' tha squeege'd my 'and i' the shed, fur theer
we was forced to 'ide,
Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and one
o' the Tommies beside. 40

VII.

Theere now, what art 'a mewin' at, Steevie?
for owt I can tell —
Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt 'a liked
tha as well.

VIII.

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while I wur
chaängin' my gown,
An' I thowt shall I chaänge my staäte? but, O
Lord, upo' coomin' down —
My bran-new carpet es fresh es a midder o'
flowers i' Maäy — 45

Why 'edn't tha wiped tha shoes? it wur clatted
all ower wi' claäy.

An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed that it
could n't be,

An' Robby I gied tha a raätin that sattled thy
coortin o' me.

An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we was a
cleänin' the floor,

That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble an'
plague wi' indoor. 50

But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to tha moor
nor the rest,

But I could n't 'a lived wi' a man an' I knaws
it be all for the best.

IX.

Naäy — let ma stroäk tha down till I maäkes
tha es smooth es silk,

But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou 'd not 'a
been worth thy milk,

Thou 'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but 'a left
me the work to do, 55

And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so es all that
I 'ears be true;

But I loovs tha to maäke thysen happy an' soä
purr awaäy, my dear,

Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro' my
oän two 'oonerd a-year.

X.

Sweärin agean, you Toms, as ye used to do
 twelve year sin'!
 Ye niver 'eärd Steevie sweär 'cep it wur at a
 dog coomin' in, 60
 An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be hallus
 a-shawin your claws,
 Fur I niver cared nothink for neither — an' one
 o' ye deäd ye knaws!
 Coom give hoäver then, weant ye? I warrant ye
 soom fine daäy —
 Theere, lig down — I shall hev to gie one or
 tother awaäy.
 Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye shant hev
 a drop fro' the päil. 65
 Steevie be right good manners bang thruf to the
 tip o' the taäil.

XI.

Robby, git down wi' tha, wilt tha? let Steevie
 coom oop o' my knee.
 Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been the
 Steevie fur me!
 Robby wur fust to be sewer, 'e wur burn an'
 bred i' the house,
 But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver patted a
 mouse. 70

XII.

An' I beänt not vaän, but I knaws I 'ed led tha
a quieter life

Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! "A faäithful
an' loovin' wife!"

An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy wind-
mill oop o' the croft,

Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did tha? but
that wur a bit ower soft,

Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi' a niced red
faäce, an' es cleän

Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran-new
'eäd o' the Queeän,

An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen, fur, Steevie,
tha kep' it sa neät

That I niver not spied sa much es a poppy along
wi' the wheät,

An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin an' seeädin'
tha haäted to see;

'Twur es bad es a battle-twig 'ere i' my oän
blue chaumber to me.

Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I could 'a
täen to tha well

But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a bouncin' boy
an' a gell.

XIII.

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I be my-
 sen o' my cats,
 But I niver not wish'd for childer, I hev n't naw
 likin' fur brats;
 Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop, an' they
 goās fur a walk, 85
 Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an' does n't
 not 'inder the talk!
 But their bottles o' pap, an' their mucky bibs,
 an' the clats an' the clouts,
 An' their mashin' their toys to pieāces an' maāk-
 in' ma deāf wi' their shouts,
 An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they was
 set upo' springs,
 An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions, an' saāyin' 90
 ondecnt things,
 An' a-callin' ma 'hugly' mayhap to my faāce,
 or a teārin' my gown—
 Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them Tommies—
 Steevie git down.

XIV.

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you. I tell'd
 ya, na moor o' that!
 Tom, lig there o' the cushion, an' tother Tom
 'ere o' the mat.

XV.

There! I ha' master'd *them*! Hed I married
 the Tommies — O Lord, 95
 To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I could n't
 'a stuck by my word.
 To be horder'd about, an' waäked, when Molly'd
 put out the light,
 By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at ony hour
 o' the night!
 An' the taäble staäin'd wi' his aäle, an' the mud
 o' his boots o' the stairs,
 An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse, an' the
 mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the chairs! 100
 An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let me 'a
 'ed my oän waäy,
 Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when they 'evn't a
 word to saäy.

XVI.

An' I sits i' my oän little parlour, an' sarved by
 my oän little lass,
 Wi' my oän little garden outside, an' my oän bed
 o' sparrow-grass,
 An' my oän door-poorch wi' the woodbine an'
 jessmine a-dressin' it greeän, 105
 An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a roäbin' the
 'ouse like a Queeän.

XVII.

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens es I be
abroad i' the laänes,
When I goäs to coomfut the poor es be down
wi' their haäches an' their paäins;
An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meät when
it beänt too dear,
They maäkes ma a graäter Laädy nor 'er i' the
mansion theer, 110
Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much to
spare or to spend;
An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soä pleäse
God, to the hend.

XVIII.

Mew! mew! — Bess wi' the milk! what ha
maäde our Molly sa laäte?
It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' theere — it
be strikin' height —
' Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf,' well — I 'eärd
'er a maäkin' 'er moän 115
An' I thowt to mysen 'thank God that I hev n't
naw cauf o' my oän.'
Theere!
Set it down!
Now Robby!
You Tommies shall waäit to-night
Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap — an' it
sarves ye right.

TO VIRGIL.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE MANTUANS
FOR THE NINETEENTH CENTENARY OF VIR-
GIL'S DEATH.

I.

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith and Dido's pyre ;

II.

Landscape-lover, lord of language
More than he that sang the Works and
Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden phrase ;

III.

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd ; 5
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word ;

IV.

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen bowers ;

To Virgil

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Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd bound with
flowers;

V.

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea; 10

VI.

Thou that seest Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human kind;

VII.

Light among the vanish'd ages;
star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

VIII.

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome — 15
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial Rome —

IX.

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
 and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
 I, from out the Northern Island
 sunder'd once from all the human race,

X.

I salute thee, Mantovano,
 I that loved thee since my day began,
 Wielder of the stateliest measure
 ever moulded by the lips of man.

20

VASTNESS.

L

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after
 many a vanish'd face,
 Many a planet by many a sun may roll with the
 dust of a vanish'd race.

II.

Raving politics, never at rest — as this poor
 earth's pale history runs,—
 What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam
 of a million million of suns?

III.

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless
violence mourn'd by the Wise, 5
Thousands of voices drowning his own in a
popular torrent of lies upon lies.

IV.

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious an-
nals of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong
cause, trumpets of victory, groans of
defeat.

V.

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and
Charity setting the martyr aflame ;
Thralldom who walks with the banner of Free-
dom, and recks not to ruin a realm in
her name. 10

VI.

Faith at her zenith or all but lost in the gloom
of doubts that darken the schools ;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, fol-
low'd up by her vassal legion of fools ;

VII.

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice
and her vintage, her silk and her corn ;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbours, famishing
populace, wharves forlorn ;

VIII.

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise ; gloom
of the evening, Life at a close ; 15
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-way
with her flying robe and her poison'd
rose ;

IX.

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of Pleas-
ure, a worm which writhes all day, and
at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and
stings him back to the curse of the light ;

X.

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots ;
honest Poverty bare to the bone ;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty ; Flattery
gilding the rift in a throne ; 20

XI

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a
jubilant challenge to Time and to Fate ;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the
laurel'd graves of the Great ;

XII.

Love for the maiden, crown'd with marriage, no
regrets for aught that has been ;
Household happiness, gracious children, debtless
competence, golden mean ;

XIII.

National hatreds of whole generations, and pigmy
spites of the village spire ;
Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle, and
vows that are snapt in a moment of fire ;

XIV.

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and
died in the doing it, flesh without mind ;
He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till Self
died out in the love of his kind ;

XV.

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter,
and all these old revolutions of earth ;
All new-old revolutions of Empire — change of
the tide — what is all of it worth ?

XVI.

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy,
varying voices of prayer ?
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is
filthy with all that is fair ?

XVII.

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being
our own corpse-coffins at last,
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd
in the deeps of a meaningless Past ?

XVIII.

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a
moment's anger of bees in their hive? — 35

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love him
for ever: the dead are not dead but alive.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM.

I.

O young Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff,
You that are watching
The gray Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
And I am dying,
I am Merlin,
Who follow The Gleam.

5

10

II.

Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learn'd the Magic!
Great the Master,

15

And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces, 20
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated The Gleam.

III.

Once at the croak of a Raven
 who crost it,
A barbarous people, 25
Blind to the magic,
And deaf to the melody,
Snarl'd at and cursed me.
A demon vext me,
The light retreated, 30
The landskip darken'd,
The melody deaden'd,
The Master whisper'd
'Follow The Gleam.'

IV

Then to the melody, 35
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,

Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant, 40
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water, 45
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted The Gleam.

v.

Down from the mountain
And over the level, 50
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens, 55
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labour, 60
Slided The Gleam —

VI.

Then with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace 65
Of Arthur the king ;
Touch'd at the golden
Cross of the churches,
Flash'd on the Tournament,
Flicker'd and bicker'd 70
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested The Gleam.

VII.

Clouds and darkness 75
Closed upon Camelot ;
Arthur had vanish'd
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die ; 80
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned
to a wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest, 85

Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to
a melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

90

VIII.

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world ;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom ;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came —
And can no longer,

95

100

105

110

But die rejoicing
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty
Who taught me in childhood, 115
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam.

IX.

Not of the sunlight, 120
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight !
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions, 125
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it, 130
Follow The Gleam.

CROSSING THE BAR.

- SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
- But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless
deep
Turns again home.
- Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;
- For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.
- 5
10
15

EXPLICIT.

Notes

CLARIBEL

A lyric that Tennyson put in the forefront of his battle for fame, and ever after retained in the place of honor is well worthy of study. The content is slight. In *The Tempest*, Claribel is the fair daughter of Alonzo, King of Naples; in *The Faerie Queene*, she is "a ladie fayre of great degree," the mistress of Phaon, whom he is betrayed into slaying by the same stratagem that Borachio practised on Claudio, in *Much Ado*. Here the theme is simply the affecting one Poe recommends, a beautiful woman, dead. The musical name implies a lovely owner; but she died long ago; the headstone is moss-grown; grief has been stilled into tender reminiscence. All lovely things gather about her resting-place — roses, moon-light, bird-song, murmuring wind in the oak-leaves, the ripple of running water. Claribel the beautiful has returned to the bosom of the All-Mother, like Wordsworth's Lucy; like "My Kate," she has made the grass greener with her grave.

The metre is a bold experiment, following no law, but that of its own inward harmony. Coleridge could read this and yet deliver his famous criticism about the young poet not very well knowing what metre was. Much of its charm lies in the archaic 'th' for 's', a euphonious termination which English of the present has unfortunately lost. In improving his work, Tennyson tried to "kick the geese out of the boat," — get rid of the sibilants — wherever possible.

MARIANA

The features of this poem are the minute, Wordsworthian observation of details, and the artistic selection of those that strengthen the central idea — "careless desolation" — within and without the lonely moated grange, and in the heart of the lonely deserted woman, waiting, expectant, with her hope ever deceived. Tennyson attains his effect by iteration; the burden "I'm a-weary," that Bulwer

sneered at, is essential. Such a repetition as the "lonely moated grange" in stanzas one and three, assists in the general effect; as does the symbolism of the single poplar tree; it is alone, as the woman is alone; its shadow falls across her bed.

True to life is the sleeplessness, the "broken sleepes," which Chaucer noted five hundred years ago, in the train of Venus; and the consequent dreamy unreality of the day. Heine puts it all in two short quatrains:

"Morgens steh' ich auf und frage
Kommt Feinsliebchen heut' ?
Abends sink' ich hin und klage :
Ausblieb sie auch heut'.

"In der Nacht mit meinem Kummer
Lieg' ich schlaflos, wach ;
Träumend, wie im halben Schlummer,
Wandle ich bei Tag."

Mariana is a lady deserted by Angelo in *Measure for Measure*. Her sad case is only mentioned in the play; but the single Shakspearean phrase falling like a seed in the rich soil of the later poet's imagination blossomed into this poem.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Galland's decorous version of these wild Oriental tales usually called *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, influenced European literature from their publication in 1704-12. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Addison, Goldsmith all felt their influence. Beckford's *Vathek* is a direct imitation. Wordsworth in *The Prelude* describes his boyish delight in an abridgment of them. The "gorgeous East" haunts the Northern imagination; and Tennyson came under the spell. The poem is a young man's dream of beauty, Keatsian in its sensuousness; the centre of the picture is naturally the "Persian girl," the odalisque. The iteration of the burden recalls and suggests the atmosphere of the "Nights." Holman Hunt's design — the lithe young Moslem in his shallop, moving down the still river — gives the sentiment of the poem. This, for Oriental love of beauty; *Fatima*, for the fire of Oriental passion.

106. *rosaries*. Rose-gardens; in Skelton, rose-bushes.

127. **moonèd domes.** The crescent moon is the badge of Islam.

THE DYING SWAN

An ideal eclectic landscape, the parts all selected as in *Mariana*, to give the necessary 'atmosphere' of melancholy. The musical note of swans before their death is discussed compendiously in *Pseudodoxia epidemica*, bk. II. cap. xxvii.

10. "**Took**" seems to have two meanings. The "weary wind" "took," that is, moved the reed-tops: and the swan's death-song also "took" the soul of that waste place with joy. This latter must be the Shakspearean sense — enchanted; as in Perdita's unfading nosegay,—

"daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares and take
The winds of March with beauty."

Tennyson uses it also in the first sense in *Enone*.

"topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning."

Kingsley hailed such poetry as "democratic." His enthusiastic appreciation shows how novel Tennyson's method was.

"Brought up . . . in a part of England, which possesses not much of the picturesque, and nothing of that which the vulgar call sublime, he has learnt to see that in all nature, in the hedgerow and the sand-bank, as well as in the alp peak and the ocean waste, is a world of true sublimity — a minute infinite — an ever fertile garden of poetic images, the roots of which are in the unfathomable and the eternal, as truly as any phenomenon which astonishes and awes the eye. The descriptions of the desolate pools and creeks where the dying swan floated, the hint of the silvery marsh mosses by Mariana's moat, came to me like revelations. I always knew there was something beautiful, wonderful, sublime in those flowery dykes of Battersea Fields; in the long gravelly sweeps of that lone tidal shore; and here was a man who had put them into words for me! This is what I call democratic art — the revelation of the poetry which lies in common things."

Alton Locke, ix.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

Tennyson's first excursion into the haunted region of Celtic romance. It is a form of the Elaine story, the maiden who dies for love of a knight, as told in Malory, bk. xviii, caps 9-20. Tennyson probably found the version used here in Roscoe's *Italian Novels*, 1825.

Published originally in 1832, this poem was greatly improved in the volume of 1842. The weak lines, phrases and stanzas may be found in Luce and van Dyke. Mr. Lang has an amusing reference to the last verse in *Old Friends*. Nowhere did Tennyson's habit of self-criticism yield better results.

In *Thoughts on Art*, p. 75, Hamerton writes: — "This is the best and most perfect word picture we have yet come upon. Yet there is not one form in it and only the very slightest hint of colour. The willows whiten, and the walls and towers are grey; that is all the colouring. Form there is none." Rash as the enterprise may seem, I venture to differ from this deliverance. "River" implies a valley and two banks, a sluggish English river with "long fields," where the rye and barley run to the sky-line. We cannot think of rye and barley growing *without* their distinctive gray-green colour. So with "lilies"; the mention of the flower suggests the white and gold of the corolla and the flat green leaves. With his general outline sketched, Tennyson fills in the road, the long, bare, unflowering ribbon of land following the windings of the river. Tillage and traffic are both suggested. Perhaps no single epithet could describe a medieval town better than "many-towered." See the exquisite little city occupying about a half-inch square at the top of Dürer's "Ritter, Tod und Teufel." The city is brought well into the picture, and, finally, the island in the river, the centre of interest. Within ten short lines, the poet has given us a "great wide country," sketched with marvellous clearness, breadth and simplicity. "Peu de moyens, beaucoup d'effet."

14. **Flowing down.** The effect of this burden is subtle; there is a stream of tendency setting towards Camelot; all things, the barges, the shallops, the pages, the girls, the abbots, the lovers, the funerals all go *down* to Camelot; and the stream draws the Lady in, at last.

15. **Four gray walls.** Again Hamerton seems to me at fault. The "form" suggested is most definite, that of the simple Norman castle, "peel," or donjon, and Mr. Boughton in his "Road to Camelot" has so pictured it.

71. **I am half sick of shadows.** The sight of the two great realities, Love and Death, weans the Lady from her magic web.

77. **bold Sir Lancelot.** In quoting this stanza (*Modern Painters*, III, 197), Ruskin prefaces, "A degree of personal beauty, both male and female, was attained in the Middle Ages, with which classical periods could show nothing for a moment comparable; and this beauty was set forth by the most perfect splendour, united with grace, in dress, which the human race have hitherto invented. The strength of their art-genius was directed in great part to this object; and their best workmen and most brilliant fanciers were employed in wreathing the mail or embroidering the robe. The exquisite arts of enamelling and chasing metal enabled them to make the armour as radiant and delicate as the plumage of a tropical bird; and the most various and vivid imaginations were displayed in the alternations of colour, and fiery freaks of form on shield and crest; so that of all the beautiful things which the eyes of men could fall upon, in the world about them, the most beautiful must have been a young knight riding out in the morning sunshine, and in faithful hope."

118. **In the stormy east-wind.** The change in the metre coincides with the change of season. It is high midsummer, harvest, when Lancelot rode among the barley sheaves in "the yellow field": it is autumn, the pale yellow woods were waning, when the Lady found the boat.

163. **Who is this?** The reader feels that in this poem more is meant than meets the ear. The Teutonic intellect seeketh after an explanation. Tennyson told Canon Ainger, "It may be a parable of the poetic nature, clashing with the world"; and Elizabeth Barrett so understood it. But this "may be" the poet's ironic acquiescence in an interpretation he never thought of when he wrote the poem. It "may be" nothing of the kind. It "may be a parable" of the mysterious intertwining of human lives. The Lady sees Sir Lancelot in a mirror, and it brings the curse on her. All unwitting what he has done, Lancelot gazes on her dead face and blesses

it for its loveliness. No interpretation need be sought any more than in *The Faerie Queene*, or *Christabel*; it is a strange story of a far-off age, on Poe's theme, a beautiful woman dead. The part of wisdom is to listen like a three-years child.

OENONE

Improved by re-writing and minute changes; for details see van Dyke's edition. The blank verse is enriched by the recurrence of a "burden," "Oh mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida, Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die;" which is really a quatrain, and gives the blank verse the quality of a song. The "burden" also divides the poem into stanzas.

Tennyson calls it "Oenone"; but its true title is "The Judgment of Paris," a favorite subject of poets and painters. The merely sensual is eliminated by the device of letting the goddesses be seen through a woman's eyes; but the picture loses little of its Titianesque color thereby. It carries on the modern treatment of classic legend, which Keats began. It is not the revival of a Greek myth; which were impossible; the Greek myth is used as a mould, or form into which is poured the poet's new gold. Not only Athene's speech, but Here's conception of power is modern: the bribe of Aphrodite is of all time.

1. **a vale in Ida.** Tennyson never saw the Troad; his landscape here is really the valley of Cauteretz, which he visited with Arthur Hallam in 1830. See Clough's *Letters*, I, 269. Sept. 1, 1861.

8. **The long brook falling.** 'My father returned from the expedition in improved health. From this time forward the lonely Pyrenean peaks with "their streaks of virgin snow" . . . and the "long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine," were a continual source of inspiration.' *Memoir*, I, 55. Cf. stanza 46 of *A Dream of Fair Women*.

16. **Paris . . . her playmate.** The statement in Apollodorus III. 12. 6 is that Paris (Alexandros) married Oenone. Hector's marriage with Andromache occurs in the same sentence.

22. **many-fountain'd Ida.** The inseparable epithet of Homer; see *Iliad*, xiv, 157.

24. quiet holds the hill. Cf. "All the air a solemn stillness holds." Gray, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*.

30. My eyes are full. Cf. "Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of grief." *Hen. IV*, b, ii, 3, 17.

32. I am all aweary. Also the refrain of "Mariana," another deserted woman.

37. daughter of a River-God. Kebren, a little river of the Troad. Oenone was then an Undine.

41. a cloud that gathereth shape. Cf. "Anon out of the earth a fabric huge Rose like an exhalation." — *Par. Lost*, i, 710, f.

66. That smelt ambrosially. Like the food of the Gods. Milton makes the Attendant Spirit in *Comus* call his "weeds" "ambrosial." In *In Memoriam*, lxxxvi, Tennyson calls air after showers, "ambrosial."

71. "For the most fair." A good statement of the history of the whole myth will be found in Gardner, *Grammar of Greek Art*, cap. xv.

93. Naked they came. In early Greek art, the goddesses are draped.

108. She to Paris made proffer. In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Euripides, (l. 1289), represents the goddesses as relying on their inherent qualities, but in the *Troades* (l. 920), they try as here, to bribe the Judge, a truly Oriental and feminine method of deciding a disputed point in æsthetics.

116. mast-thronged. Cf. *The Prophecy of Cypys*,

"Where in the still deep water,
Sheltered from waves and blasts,
Bristles the dusky forest,
Of Byrsa's thousand masts."

128 are likest gods. Cf. *Tamburlaine*, II, v, 57-59.

"A god is not so glorious as a king.
I think the pleasure they enjoy in heaven,
Cannot compare with kingly joys on earth."

151. Sequel of guerdon. A reward following your decision.

158. So that my vigour. That is the force of wisdom

joined to his energy. It has been often pointed out that this ideal of the growth of character is modern; perhaps Tennyson's own ideal.

188. **And I was left alone.** Cf. the strength given by the repetition, as here, of this one word in *The Ancient Mariner* "Alone, alone, all all alone &c."

204. **They came.** The Trojan ship-builders, I conjecture, to cut the timber for the vessel that took Paris to Sparta.

220. **The Abominable.** Eris, the goddess of Discord, the "fairy god-mother," who takes revenge for not being invited to the feast.

233. **how canst thou bear.** The same idea in *King John* III, i, 71-73, where Constance enthrones herself upon the ground

"for my grief 's so great
That no supporter but the huge firm earth
Can hold it up:"

260. **fire dances.** This last stanza shows the pagan despair at the thought of death with no hope beyond. The 'fire' here and in the last line hints at the sack of Troy.

To —

The poem may have been addressed to Trench or to some imaginary artist. Though a follower of Keats, Tennyson here protests against the central Keatsian doctrine,

"Beauty is truth, truth, beauty — this is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Again, "St. Agnes' Eve," with its ideal of heavenly ecstasy, seems intended as a pendant to the intoxicating sensuousness of "The Eve of St. Agnes."

THE PALACE OF ART

The poet has given his interpretation of the allegory once in verse ("To —"); and once in prose. "Trench said to me,

when we were at Trinity together, 'Tennyson, we cannot live in art.' 'The Palace of Art' is the embodiment of my own belief that the Godlike life is with man and for man." *Memoir*, 1, 118. There are several references to the interest this poem excited, *ibid.* pp. 85-89. It was much improved in later editions. The poet wondered why people treasured the "rubbish" he "shot from" his "full-finish'd cantos;" but they do. See *Memoir*, 1, 119 f. and van Dyke, *The Poetry of Tennyson*, p. 33 ff., Luce, p. 128 ff.

1. **I built my soul.** Composed at Cambridge, the architectural features of the "Palace" are all drawn from collegiate buildings. The "squared lawns" the fountains, the corridors, the cloisters, the stained glass windows, the oriels, the bell-towers could all be paralleled in that university town. The Rich Fool said to his soul: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease; eat, drink and be merry."

80. **hoary to the wind.** The "little grey leaves" of the olive, stirred by the wind; like "willows whiten."

99. **slept St. Cecily.** This stanza and the second following suggested two very rich and characteristic designs to Rossetti. See the *Moxon Tennyson* of 1857.

111. **The Ausonian king.** Numa Pompilius; the wood-nymph was Egeria.

115. **Indian Cama.** Kamadeva, the Eros of Hindu mythology; *not* the Indian Venus, as Mr. Churton Collins states.

126. **the supreme Caucasian mind.** The Aryan, or Indo-European 'white' race, which was thought to have its home in the region of the Caucasus. Why Mr. Churton Collins should find the "expression obscure," and make it darker by his explanation is hard to understand.

157. **over these she trod.** Symbolic of the Soul's pride and aloofness from humanity: she treads underfoot the mosaic "of the human tale."

163. **Verulam.** The correct title of "Lord Bacon" is Viscount St. Albans and Verulam. This may be regarded as Tennyson's protest against the Aristotelians. Dante calls Aristotle, "the master of those who know," and Tennyson transfers the title to the father of modern science. It is not necessary to suppose, with Churton Collins, that "the exigencies of rhyme caused the inapposite substitution of Bacon for Aristotle."

223. **The abysmal deeps.** A modified phrase of Arthur Hallam's: see *Remains*, 359. The phrase found at least two hostile critics; see *Memoir*, I, 86.

241. **shades, enclosing hearts of flame.** In the hall of Eblis (in *Vathek*), crowds wander about, each with his right hand upon his heart. Each bosom is "transparent as crystal"; Each heart is "enveloped in flames." "They went wandering on from chamber to chamber, hall to hall, and gallery to gallery; all without bounds or limit; all distinguishable by the same lowering gloom; all adorned with the same awful grandeur; all traversed by persons in search of repose and consolation, but who sought them in vain, for every one carried within him a heart tormented in flames," p. 144 f.

255. **Circumstance.** "Old word for the surrounding sphere of the heavens." (Palgrave).

287. **What is there, &c.** "Out of the repentant cry came escape from the dread comradeship of her self. I will return to humility and to love, to lowly life with men and women.

'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
'Where I may mourn and pray;'

for 'love is of the valley,' and when love is learned I will return to my palace; for when I love, and return with others there, bringing all I love with me to enjoy with me — the beauty which turned to corruption when I was alone will live in glory." Brooke, *Tennyson*, 90.

THE LOTUS-EATERS

Like so many others, this poem was revised, added to and in parts re-written in the edition of 1842, to its great improvement. For the variants, see van Dyke.

The source, the merest suggestion, is in *Odyssey*, ix. 83 ff. When Keats made a poem of a Greek myth, he strove to reproduce it. Tennyson is not content with that aim, or with making a beautiful poem. He is incurably "modern," of our own age, and he strives to put new content into the old tale. He will not sunder the ideal sisterhood, the Good, the True, the Beautiful. The underlying thought is somewhat the same as in *The Palace of Art*, the

moral wrong of putting aside the responsibilities of life. This treatment of classic myth is characteristic ; compare *Ulysses*. "A warning to the drifters and dreamers of this world," p. 120. S. Brooke.

1. 'Courage!' he said. Spenser is the poet's poet. Here Tennyson has caught the secret of his special stanza, the long sentence, the linked sweetness long drawn out of the verse-structure, and the grammatical clearness. Byron did not.

3. unto a land. As in *The Lady of Shalott*, the poet sketches here a great, ideal landscape, of Turnerian breadth and distance, with a few simple strokes.

26. dark faces pale. Tennyson has the artist's sensitiveness to the effect of color on color. Cf. Aphrodite's foot *shining* 'rosy-white' against the blue of the violets, in *Oenone*.

41. most weary seem'd the sea. The exact opposite of the sentiment of *Ulysses*; the hero cannot rest from travel.

Choric Song.

53. mosses deep. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, II, xii, 61.

130. Long labour unto aged breath, &c. These lines give the attitude of the weak-willed and self-pitying towards the conception of life as duty. The other side of the argument seems to have been given intentionally, in *Ulysses*, l. 50 "Old age hath yet his honour and his toil," &c. The reasons for shirking are drawn from the example of Nature (stanza III), the example of the Epicurean gods (stanza VIII), the certainty of Death (stanza IV), the worthlessness of their achievement, in the end (stanza VI); so they surrender themselves to the pleasures of contemplation, not action. "The slothful man saith there is a lion in the way." The lotus-root is a poison. Ulysses dragged his mariners "beneath the benches and bound them in the hollow barques."

151. Roll'd to starboard. The lift and swing and roll of a strong-going vessel in a heavy sea seem to have got into these two lines.

173. Oh rest ye. The thesis was never maintained with more fascination and power.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

Revised and improved by excision in later editions. Tennyson advised Browning against "long-backed" poems; and practised what he preached. For omitted stanzas and variants, see van Dyke.

Regarding the original opening, doctors disagree. The magisterial Morton Luce considered the poem "quite ruined" thereby: FitzGerald thought these stanzas in Tennyson's "best style; no fretful epithet, nor a word too much;" . . . "they make a perfect poem by themselves without affecting the 'dream.'"

A Dream. Taine says "What first attracted people were Tennyson's portraits of women." This is the best part of his gallery.

2. **The Legend.** Tennyson's direct obligation to Chaucer is slight enough; but the dreaming over a book, the vision of the dewy wood, and the gracious figures there are thoroughly Chaucerian.

3. **the morning star.** The glory of the dawn, of Genesis, "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." *Job*.

5. **Dan Chaucer.** 'Don,' 'Dom,' 'Dominie,' and 'Dan' are all titles of honor from Lat. 'dominus.' See *Faerie Queene*, iv, ii. st. 82 for the first use of the term. Spenser, with his age, admired Chaucer greatly.

43. **As when a great thought.** Cf. "Stung by the splendour of a sudden thought." *A Death In The Desert*.

52. **the gulfs of sleep.** It should be noted that here first the poet falls asleep. What has gone before is not a phantasmagoria of dream images; but the peculiar experience of *illusions hypnogogiques*. The dream that follows is clear-cut, definite, consistent as compared with the swift succession of images melting the one into the other which preceded. Tennyson harvested his dreams.

54. **an old wood.** Chaucer's favorite *mise-en-scène*. See *Deth of Blaunche the Duchesse, Parlement of Foules*, &c. Joy, more than any other painter, has realized the poet's description of the wood in his "Dream of Fair Women," exhibited in the Royal Academy, 1905.

77. **the smell of violets.** It is rare to have a sensation of odors in dreams.

86. stiller than chisell'd marble. The comparison of Helen to a statue is natural: we know the art of the Greeks chiefly through their sculpture.

98. such a face. "Is this the face that launched a thousand ships And burn'd the topless towers of Ilium?" Marlowe, *Faustus*.

105. I was cut off. Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon.

118. I would the white. "An echo of her words in Il. vi. 345: would that on the day when my mother bare me at the first, an evil storm-wind had caught me away to a mountain or a billow of the loud-sounding sea, where the billow might have swept me away before all these things came to pass, and Il. iii. 173: would that sore death had been my pleasure when I followed thy son hither and left my home and my kinsfolk." Mustard, *Classical Echoes*, 9.

126. a queen with swarthy cheeks. "Thus one of our most popular poets describes Cleopatra; and one of our most popular artists has illustrated the description by a portrait of a hideous grinning Ethiop. . . . But Cleopatra was a Greek, the daughter of Ptolemy Auletes, and a Lady of Pontus. The Ptolemies were Greeks, and whoever will look at their genealogy, their coins and their medals, will see how carefully they kept their pure Greek blood uncontaminated by African intermixture." Peacock, *Gryll Grange*, cap. xxiii. The artist is Millais. See the Moxon *Tennyson* of 1857. The censure is perhaps deserved.

132. like the moon. Cf.

"You have the power, sweet,
To make me passionate as an April day,
You are the powerful moon of my sea's blood,
To make it ebb or flow into my face,
As your looks change."

The Witch of Edmonton, II, II.

141. rode sublime. Cf. *Par. Lost*, vi, 771, and sonnet XIII.

"And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies."

157. With that she tore. The stanza Millais illustrated too faithfully and thereby drew down Peacock's censure.

171. **fill'd with light.** Cf. Elizabeth Barrett Browning,

"the smile she softly uses
Fills the silence like a speech."

Romance of the Swan's Nest.

"Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,
You look'd at her silence and fancied she spoke."

My Kate.

174. **rings.** Cleopatra's eyes as burning-glasses.

177. **my sense undazzled.** This, the general effect of great beauty, is crystallized in the ballad formula "lady bright." At first sight of Juliet, Romeo cries "Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright," a jewel-like brilliance against the black of night and fate.

179. **crested bird.** Pace Professor van Dyke, this should be, not the cock, but the lark. The 'crested lark' is Theocritan (*Id.* vii, 23) and ornithologists recognize a species, *Alauda cristata*. However, I have in mind Tennyson's rebuke to the 'cockney,' who thought that the birds calling 'Maud, Maud, Maud,' were nightingales, and not rooks. As in the case of the Saracen's Head, much may be said on both sides. Like the cathedral close and "the smell of violets, hidden in the green," the song of the lark starts no train of association for us of the cis-Atlantic world.

197. **the warrior Gileadite.** See *Judges* xi, 26-40.

213. **my maiden blame.** The glory of the Eastern woman is to bear children. See *Judges* xi, 37.

238. **Aroer on Arnon.** Phrase from *Judges* xi, 33. Like Milton, Tennyson knows the value of place names in sonorous effect and historical association.

251. **Rosamond.** "Rosa mundi non Rosa munda"; the daughter of Walter de Clifford and mistress of Henry II. See *Becket*, and *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

259. **Fulvia.** "The married woman." Queen Eleanor is often represented as offering Rosamond the choice of death by the dagger or the bowl of "poison strong."

263. **captain of my dreams.** Venus, the leader of the poet's vision of fair women.

266. **her who clasped.** Margaret Roper, the daughter of Sir Thomas More, executed in the reign of Henry VIII. See *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

269. **her who knew.** Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I. Millais' illustration of this verse in the Moxon *Tennyson* of 1857 is very fine.

283. **yearnings.** "groanings which cannot be uttered." *Rom.* viii, 26.

285. **Because all words.** Commentators avoid this stanza: but the imagery is not clear: what has the fainting of the heart, faded by its (own?) heat, to do with the insipidity of the sweet words that do not give the necessary corrective bitter? Does the poet think his words over-sweet? The withering beneath the palate must mean distasteful. Does 'heat' mean passion? or eagerness to realize its thought?

To J. S.

Published as the last in *Poems*, 1832. Tennyson had "a noble and a true conceit Of god-like amity." His friendship with Arthur Hallam is only the most famous of many friendships. His poems expressing his feelings for FitzGerald, Jebb, Kemble, Spedding, Jowett, Maurice, Brookfield, Sir John Simeon, make a fine "garland." Here he attempts a friend's most difficult office, the consolation of a friend in bereavement. The retarded movement of the quatrains is elegiac in effect; and suggests the metre of *In Memoriam*, as does the general line of thought. It is a consummate letter of sympathy: Hallam thought the lines "perfect." *Memoir*, i, 88.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

This poem seems to have been composed in 1834. Tennyson was copying it in October of that year (*Memoir*, i, 138.). This is the nucleus about which gathered between 1834 and 1885, the full-orbed epic, *The Idylls of the King*.

The setting is intimately English. After the Christmas games in another "Bracebridge Hall," the poet reads to the sleepy parson and his host the eleventh book of his lost epic: the others have been burnt. In some forty years (for Tennyson was a man "of long-enduring hopes"), the great poem stood complete, in twelve books. It must have been a pleasure to the poet to build up this great mon-

ument about the name of Arthur, the name of his first and dearest friend.

The title and the material come from Caxton's "noble and joyous historie." Spenser used the legends in his great allegory, and made Arthur typify Magnificence, the sum of the moral virtues, much as Tennyson has done. Milton's Cambridge note-book shows that he considered the Arthurian cycle as a possible subject for the great poem he was training himself to write. Dryden thought of doing the same thing, as Scott eloquently laments; but it was reserved for the poet of the nineteenth century to give the great tale its final poetic shape.

Before 1859, there is no evidence of the poet's intention to surcharge his epic with allegory, and shadow Soul at war with Sense. He had been content to turn the prose of Caxton into flowing blank verse narratives, giving them unity and consistency and raising them in tone.

Adverse criticism hardly goes further than calling his characters "dainty," "Canova-like figures," "drawing-room pictures for a ladies' school," and King Arthur an "impeccable prig." Tennyson does not lack eloquent defenders, — Hutton, Paton, Swinburne; but the real defense is yet to be made. Tennyson did not aim at reproducing the "savages of the sixth century," nor the knightly ideals of the fifteenth. The Greeks and Romans of Corneille and Racine do not belong to the palmy days of Greece and Rome; they are the grand seigneurs, and the great ladies of the reign of Louis Quatorze. So Tennyson's Enids and Elaines, his Lancelots and Gareths are thoroughbred English men and women of the early Victorian era. Millais' canvasses preserve their features and their noble air. To my thinking, there is much more of Arthur Hallam in the "blameless King," than the Prince Consort, to quote the oft-repeated sneer. From the very first, Arthur has represented the ideal of each different poet's age.

31. clothed in white samite. The German 'Sammet,' velvet.

36. Excalibur . . . fling him. Arthur's sword has a name and a personality. With primitive peoples, the personal weapon, especially the sword, is thought of as alive; it speaks, sings and gives oracles.

56. **diamond sparks.** Until 1853, the reading was 'studs,' common ornaments of armor: the weaker 'sparks' is due to Tennysonian fastidiousness.

60. **This way and that dividing.** Translation of *Aeneid*, iv, 285. For Tennyson's obligations to the classics first and last, see Mustard's admirable *Classical Echoes in Tennyson*. It is the last word on the subject.

222. **Not like that Arthur.** Cf. Marlowe, *Edward II*, v. 5,

"Tell Isabel, the queen, I looked not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there unhorsed the Duke of Claremont."

240. **The old order changeth.** *The Morte D'Arthur* appeared in 1842, just at the climax of the Oxford movement, the Chartist movement and the Corn Law agitation. Parliamentary reform and Catholic Emancipation were accomplished facts. The "old order" in England was decidedly changed.

247. **"Pray for my soul."** A typical Tennysonian change. In Caxton, this is simply the usual request of a medieval Catholic; but Tennyson enlarges the conception of the efficacy of prayer and makes it acceptable to all faithful souls.

259. **island-valley of Avilion.** This is the Celtic conception of the Elysian fields, the opposite of the climate they knew. Compare the landscape of Ossian with the fairyland of *Kilmeny*.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

In his *Victorian Poets*, Stedman has demonstrated once for all, Tennyson's obligations to Theocritus. These obligations, Tennyson himself seems to proclaim in the very title of the poems of 1842. *English Idylls*, then, are to be understood as 'little pictures' of English life. There is this difference however between the English, and the Sicilian poet, that whereas Theocritus deals with an incident, Tennyson gives the incident a setting. *The Gardener's Daughter* is an excellent example of his method. The idyl proper is where Rose is discovered by the two young painters among the roses 'mingled with her fragrant toil'; the narrator asks for a flower, and the maiden moves away. It is a very beautiful 'little

picture,' especially appropriate on the lips of a painter. But this is only the central incident in the story as told by the old man before he draws the veil from the picture of his dead wife. The situation is almost the same as in *My Last Duchess*, but with a difference.

13. **So light of foot.** Tennyson recalls the impression of youthful grace that Juliet made, not on her lover, but on the pious churchman. 'Oh, so light a foot will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.' Her light motion of the young thing and the 'white wonder' of her hand are the only two hints of her beauty that Shakspeare vouchsafes us. Tennyson's Juliet and Rose are like Shakspeare's Hermia and Helena, thoroughly English girls; Juliet is little, dark, fairy-like, another Lillia; Rose is Hebe, with violet eyes and soft brown hair.

28. **More black than ash-buds.** An example of Tennyson's minutely Wordsworthian observation of Nature. Perhaps too minute. See *Cranford*, iv, for the admiration it could excite.

33. **Not wholly in the busy world.** The scenery here described, ll. 33-47, is foreign to us; as is the birdsong in ll. 89-95.

48. **hoarded in herself.** Like Wordworth's Lucy. Cf.

'And vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself.'

Ulysses, l. 28.

62. **My heart was like a prophet.** Cf. *The Princess*,

'Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world
I loved the woman.'

83. **For those old Mays.** It is an old man who speaks, 'laudator temporis acti.'

110. **gave into.** A Gallicism; 'donner sur.'

115. **A cedar spread.** Like Tennyson's own famous cedar of Lebanon at Farringford under which he wrote *Maud*.

132. **touched a foot.** Of fairy lightness too, like Juliet's.

140. **an old man young.** The old men of Troy forgot the evils she had brought upon their city, when Helen passed through the streets.

141. **a Rose in roses.** Cf. 'Queen Rose of the rosebud garden of girls,' *Maud*, xxii.

152. **betwixt this mood.** Cf. 'This way and that dividing the swift mind,' *Morte D'Arthur*.

244. **The secret bridal chambers.** Tennyson had his love-letters burnt before his death. Carlyle speaks of 'The Blue-beard chambers of the heart.'

262. **Night slid.** One thinks of Thorwaldsen's relief, 'Night,' with the tender child asleep on her shoulder.

267. **Raise thy soul.** As in the service; 'Sursum corda.'

DORA

The source of this poem is 'Dora Creswell,' in Miss Mitford's most important work, *Our Village*, a remarkable series of transcripts from English rural life. Tennyson modified the original story, making Dora a woman instead of a girl, and changing the ending.

Like *The Gardener's Daughter*, it shows how Tennyson modified the Theocritan idyl. The whole story of Dora's life is told; but the idyl proper, the central incident, is Dora sitting on the mound with William's boy and the meeting with her uncle.

The critics are fond of drawing a contrast between the *simplicité* of Wordsworth in *Michael*, and the *simplesse* of Tennyson in this poem; but Wordsworth said, 'Mr. Tennyson, I have been endeavoring all my life to write a pastoral like your "Dora," and have not succeeded.'

22. **Then the old man Was wroth.** Millais illustrated this line and l. 159 ff. in the 1857 *Tennyson*. The second design at the end of the poem is particularly happy.

68. **sake of him that's gone.** Carlyle notices this periphrasis for 'died' in the speech of his own peasant father. "The Dead again he spoke of with perfect freedom, only with serious gravity (perhaps a lowering of the voice), and always, even in the most trivial conversation, adding 'that's gane': 'my brother John that's gane' did so and so." *Reminiscences*, 1, 42.

71. **where many poppies grew.** Exotic for Americans who never see the crimson poppies growing like weeds among the yellow grain. Cf.

"Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
If our loves remain,
In an English lane,
With the cornfield-side, a-flutter with poppies,"
Browning, *De Gustibus*.

and Hood, *Ruth*,

"On her cheek an autumn flush
Deeply ripen'd. Such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown in corn."

And 'corn' has to be translated too.

77. And the reapers reap'd. This half line constitutes, with the following line, a 'burden,' which divides the two days when Dora went to the field. Note l. 106 f.

ULYSSES

The text is remarkable in having escaped revision after publication. The suggestion comes from Dante, *Inferno*, cant. xxvi, ll. 90-120. Ulysses is in the eighth 'bolgia' of the circle of Hell, reserved for evil counsellors. He tells Dante and Virgil, "Neither fondness for my son, nor reverence for my aged sire, nor the due love which ought to have gladdened Penelope, could conquer in me the ardor which I had to become experienced in the world and in human vice and worth. I put out into the deep open sea with but one ship, and that small company which had not deserted me. . . . I and my companions were old and tardy when we came to that narrow pass where Hercules assigned his landmarks. 'O brothers,' I said, 'who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the West, deny not this to the brief vigil of your senses that remain — experience of the unpeopled world beyond the sun. Consider your origin; ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge.' . . . Night already saw the pole with all its stars, and ours so low that it rose not from the ocean floor."

The poem springs directly from the poet's friendship with Hallam. He tells us himself that it was "written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feelings about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*." *Memoir*, I, 196. As his practice is, Tennyson puts new wine into old bottles. His Ulysses is not Homer's shifty Greek, nor Dante's evil counsellor, nor Arnold's 'spare, dark-featured, quick-eyed stranger.' Ulysses is a modern temperament, a noble one, which was also frequent at the Renaissance, and

leads men through strange Odysseys of the soul. The poem, which celebrates the dignity and heroism of age, was written by a young man in his twenties ; but there is no grief so deep as the grief of generous youth. It is hard to read this poem aloud without feeling that unreasonable catch in the throat. Of lines 62-64, Carlyle wrote, "These lines do not make me weep, but there is in me what would fill whole Lachrymatories as I read." *Memoir*, I, 214.

50. *Old age hath yet.* The exact opposite of the sentiment of *The Lotus-Eaters*, l. 130.

55. *Come, my friends.* As has been pointed out, this feeling of comradeship is modern, such as one of Nelson's captains might have had for a proven crew.

ST. AGNES' EVE

Tennyson mentions this poem in a letter to J. Spedding in 1834: see *Memoir*, I, 142. As an expression of religious ecstasy at the contemplation of the Vision Beatific, this poem seems intended as a pendant to the revel of the senses in *The Eve of St. Agnes*. The lives of the saints, the life of Theresa, furnish abundant material. Millais' design represents the nun going up a turret stair, taper in hand. Through a narrow window are seen the convent roofs laden with snow and bathed in moonlight.

SIR GALAHAD

Another grave sweet melody of 1834. See *Memoir*, I, 139. A favorite theme of young poets is the time of April blood, the intoxication of the senses, the surrender to passion. Only a few have been fitted by their lives to celebrate the sage and serious doctrine of virginity. John Milton, another Cambridge man, fresh from the university, gave it honor and immortal praise in *Comus*. Milton's Lady and Tennyson's Knight are a worthy pair : but the man as man, as militant, as adventurer, comes nearer the range of our poor sympathies. The poem, like *St. Agnes' Eve*, is a vivid portrayal of religious ecstasy. There is an abiding sense of the Divine Presence, such as led Chinese Gordon through a life of

shocks to a hero's death in the city he could not save : at times it passes over into rapture.

In the *Morte d'Arthur*, the Sangreal or Holy Grail is the vessel which held the wine at the Last Supper, and in which Joseph of Arimathea caught our Saviour's blood at the crucifixion. It was brought by him to Glastonbury. The legend of the quest Tennyson elaborated in the seventh Idyll of the King, *The Holy Grail*. His point of view has altered in the mean time : he makes the quest mischievous as making the knights neglectful of duty : the most follow wandering fires : Galahad attains, but he is lost to earth.

32. the tapers burning fair. The difficulties presented to the illustrator by this and the four following lines were triumphantly overcome by Rossetti in a most beautiful design for the Moxon Tennyson of 1857. Not only the purity and strength of Galahad's face, but the suggestion of the supernatural by means of the hidden angelic choir, is masterly. No part of the block is wasted : in the little triangle above Galahad's shield, you see his charger tethered to a forest tree, "between dark stems."

69-72. This passage describes the ecstatic state, a familiar experience of Tennyson himself. "A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me thro' repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life." "This might," he said, "be the state which St. Paul describes, 'Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell.'" *Memoir*, I, 320. Cf. *The Ancient Sage and In Memoriam*, xcv. 9.

EDWARD GRAY

This has been described as "a pretty, homely ballad of the type of 'Barbara Allen,' but much refined." It is a song of two heart-

breaks, a long story of love and sorrow told ballad-fashion by a master in thirty-six short lines, vivid, moving, impossible to forget. The simplicity, the passion, the perfection of the verse as verse, even the quaint detail of writing on the stone, which some critics boggle at, recall Heine at his best.

Millais' design is touching and wonderfully true to the actual words as well as the sentiment of the poem.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

A short unemotional paragraph in Burke's *Peerage* gives the necessary outlines from which the intelligent reader can construct the whole story. Henry Cecil, tenth earl of Exeter, was born in 1754. He married thrice. By his first marriage, with Emma, only daughter and heir of Thomas Vernon, Esq., of Hanbury, county Worcester (from whom he was divorced in 1791), he had no surviving issue. In October of the same year he married Sarah, daughter of Thomas Hoggins (with no 'Esquire'), of Bolas, County Salop. She died in 1797. In 1800 the marquess married a third time, and died four years later. Sarah Hoggins's eldest son, Brownlow, became the second marquess of Exeter. Her second son, Thomas, became a colonel in the army, and married a sister of the Duke of Richmond. Her daughter, Sophia, died in 1823.

The poem is on the same plan as *The Gardener's Daughter* and *Dora*. The central incident, the idyl proper, is the wedding journey from the village altar to Burleigh House. Her life before this incident is implied and her after life summarized.

79. **The burthen of an honour.** Tennyson wrote this before marriages between English peers and American girls were common. It would be almost impossible for a girl brought up under democratic conditions to feel this 'burthen'; but an English girl of Sarah Hoggins's rank in life would still be unequal to it.

THE VOYAGE

The English are an island people, and as a consequence their literature is full of the sea. It is also rich in allegory. *The Voyage* is

a sea-poem and a parable of human life. The crew of the ship are one generation of men, in ceaseless progression, in constant pursuit of the Vision that flies before, — Fancy, or Virtue, or Knowledge, or Heavenly Hope, or Liberty. They will never attain, but in spite of cynic jibes and crippling age, they will never abandon the chase.

4. **fleeted to the South.** This is the general course of the ship of the Ancient Mariner.

73. **only one among us.** The inevitable critic, — Carlyle, perhaps.

77. **"A ship of fools."** Sebastian Brandt wrote a long satire, *Der Narrenschiff*, which was freely translated into English by Alexander Barclay, and published by him in 1509, under the title *The Ship of Fools of the Worlds*.

86. **whence were these.** Physical force is not the only motive power in the world. Spiritual forces play their part as well.

THE VISION OF SIN

The sin of which the young poet has his vision is not all sin, the sin of the world, such as Milton embodied in his woman-snake portress of Hell Gate, but the sin of youth that filled the second great circle of the *Inferno* with countless multitudes. In the physical world there is no forgiveness of this (or any other) sin. Its inevitable consequences are disillusionment, cynicism, disbelief in all things high. Burns, who ought to know, says :

"I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling."

The two parts of the poem are two contrasted revels: the first, a Bacchic orgy in a palace to unearthly music; the second, a deliberate senile debauch in a ruined inn, the Dragon on the Heath, to the wicked staves of the slipshod waiter. The contrast is emphasized in point after point, even to the difference in the metres.

3. **He rode a horse with wings.** Pegasus. The 'youth' is a gifted nature, a poet, not a mere sensualist. Cf. *Maud*, iv. 7,

'The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.'

His death song, though pessimism absolute, is poetic.

17. **Low voluptuous music.** One of the few good descriptions of the indescribable, — music; comparable to Milton's in *L'Allegro*.

31. **Purple gauzes.** Youthful passion described symbolically in terms of music and color. It is not quite clear whether the music affects the fountain, or simply passes over into color.

67. **Bitter barmaid.** Mr. Edmund J. Sullivan has several remarkable designs for this part of the poem, amounting to a pictorial interpretation of it. The waiter and the man as lean as death make merry over a bowl of punch. At first, the servant keeps a respectful distance from the guest, his social superior. At last, they are arm in arm and the waiter, in trying to fill the guest's glass with the punch-ladle, spills the liquor on the table. This is the stage of 'maudlin gall,' when toast after toast has been drunk in mockery.

103. **Name and fame.** A cynical summary of the activities of man, like the mournful summary in *Vastness*.

141. **the hue of that cap.** The *bonnet rouge* of the French Revolutionists. The goddess of Liberty on the U. S. coinage wears one. The old debauchee and cynic is evidently a Tory.

189. **Buss me.** Sullivan represents a skeleton, with long hair adhering to the skull, kissing the man as lean as death.

224. **God made himself.** Tennyson was perfectly within his rights in declining to explain this line to Tyndall. The artist is permitted to create his own mystery. See *Memoir*, II, 475. Here, as in *In Memoriam*, LV, the poet faintly trusts the larger hope. See: *Memoir*, I, 322.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Date of composition uncertain: "made in a Lincolnshire lane at 5 o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges." *Memoir*, I, 190. One of the earliest attempts to express the desolation which overwhelmed the poet upon the death of Arthur Hallam, a fore-runner of *In Memoriam*. The sound of the sea upon the shore is melancholy when it is not terrifying. The sense of the un-

utterable oppresses great hearts, at times; especially in the presence of mountains, the sea, death. Shakspeare makes Cleopatra in her last hour have "immortal yearnings." Madame Roland on the scaffold wishes for a pen to write down the thoughts that arose in her. The pictures so deftly suggested of the children on the shore, the merry sailor in his boat, the procession of tall ships with their tiering canvas, bring out by contrast the infinite sadness of the sea, — the sea, that separates like death.

11. Touch of a vanished hand. Cf. *In Memoriam*, VII,

"Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,"

and *ibid.* x,

"And hands so often clasp'd in mine
Should toss with tangle and with shells,"

also *ibid.* XIII, 6, 7, and CXIX, 12.

SONGS FROM THE PRINCESS

The 'poems' of Tennyson which in 1830 first caught the ear of the discerning were 'chiefly lyrical.' In the last years of his life, he could write such a genuine lilt as *The Throstle*, delightful fruit off an old tree. It has been the fashion lately to disparage his songs as artificial and sophisticated. If it were so, it were a grievous fault: but this disparagement is simply the reaction against former praise. His songs have not only a ravishing "Doric delicacy," but they can be, and are, sung. They are not only verbal melodies revealing unsuspected possibilities in our "harsh grunting Northern guttural;" but the sentiment rings true; and they are rich in suggestion and picture. The total impression is clear; there is no quaint phrase to catch the ear and fix the attention on itself to the effacement of the neighboring lines. The songs between the parts of *The Princess* were an afterthought of the poet. They all point to the child, as the centre of the poem, the real heroine; and at times they catch up the sentiment of the narrative, as "Under the greenwood tree" catches up the sentiment of *As You Like It*.

The Falling Out

Picture is suggested in the phrase "thro' the land." It calls up great spaciousness of harvest fields, and the foot-path alongside. In contrast to the breadth of earth and sky is the grave of the child in the churchyard, wherein is buried all unkindness. The first child of Tennyson was born dead, like the first child of *The Grandmother*.

Lullaby

A song of what all the world, Catholic or not, worships, — the Madonna, — a mother hushing her child to sleep on her breast. From her cottage on the cliff, the mother can see the moonlight on the waters and the silver sails. The west wind which fans her is bringing the father home to the babe in the nest.

Bugle Song

This song was inspired by the scenery and echoes of Killarney, which Tennyson visited in 1842 and 1848. Aubrey de Vere (*Memoir*, I, 292 f.) explains in picturesque prose how true it is in local color; but it need not be. For those who never have seen Killarney, the lyric has power to conjure up some wide Turnerian landscape of snowy peaks and castles and cataracts, full of beauty and haunted by the expectancy of further beauty about to be revealed, like the Queen of Fairies with all the horns of Elfland in her train on some far summit. Dawson explains:

" Our echoes roll from soul to soul
And *grow* for ever and for ever."

The stress of the meaning is on the word *grow*. The song is evidently one of married love, and the growing echoes reverberate from generation to generation, from grandparent to parent and child. Once more it is unity through the family.

10. horns of Elfland. Scott brings these eerie horns into *Marmion* (v, xxiv) and sets them blowing with striking effect.

" They heard a faint yet shrilly tone,
Like distant clarion feebly blown."

Idle Tears

There must be some strange charm in the scenery of the 'sylvan Wye' to inspire two poets like Wordsworth and Tennyson with *Tintern Abbey* and *Idle Tears*. "It was written at Tintern when the woods were all yellowing with autumn seen through the ruined windows. It is what I have always felt even from a boy, and what as a boy I called the 'passion of the past.' And so it is always with me now ; it is the distance that charms me in the landscape, the picture and the past, and not the immediate to-day in which I move." Tennyson to James Knowles, *Nineteenth Century*, Jan., 1893.

It is a characteristic effort of the romantic genius to express the inexpressible. Tennyson said : "It is in a way like St. Paul's 'groanings that cannot be uttered.'" The suggestion of sadness comes from a sight that is anything but sad, — "the happy autumn fields." The ordinary mind goes no further than the thought of plenty, the long labor of the husbandman in sun and rain crowned with fruition ; but the sight plays on the poet's sensitive soul. Mrs. Browning makes the Eden spirits sing to Adam and Eve as they are driven from the Garden,

"In all your music, our pathetic minor
Your ears shall cross ;
And all good gifts shall mind you of diviner
With sense of loss."

This is precisely the idea : the good gift of harvest reminds of diviner, something lost and gone for ever, the past. Tennyson supplies both the poem and the best and briefest criticism upon it, "the passion of the past." Each aspect of the past, 'fresh,' 'sad,' 'strange,' 'dear,' 'sweet,' is illustrated by a most illuminating comparison.

This rimeless blank verse lyric in which the absence of rime is never noted, because of the perfect rhythms, is a contribution to English song peculiarly Tennyson's.

North and South

The attraction of the South — the land of summer — for the genius of the North is exemplified in a thousand instances, from

the wanderings of the Goths, and the Varangers taking service in Byzantium to the Italian journeys of Goethe and Winckelmann, and the fatal pilgrimages of Keats, and Shelley, and Byron. Heine puts it all in two immortal quatrains, "*Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam.*" The fir-tree's dream of the palm is a universal symbol. This too is a timeless poem in which the perfection of rhythm makes the reader forget that there is no rime.

The Call to War

This intercalary song strikes the keynote of the following war-like canto. Here again, the Child sways destiny. It is the sight of the brood about the mother's knee that nerves the warrior to victory. In that splendid army which broke the pride of France in one short summer month of 1870, there was no more terrible force than the married men, the *Landwehr*.

The Call to Life

Again the influence of the Child is celebrated. The sight of "his" child not only breaks the widowed mother's trance of grief; it gives her the blessed relief of tears and also the courage to live. The lyric embodies universal truth. Compare the words of the old *châtelaine* in De Maupassant's most moving story, "*Après.*" Tennyson improved on Scott's version. See *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto 1, sta. 9. The artist's power is manifest in making the few plain lines of unforced ballad measure tell a long story and suggest the atmosphere of the middle ages, — feud, sudden calamity, stupefying sorrow, maidens in the bower, warriors in the hall. You look twice to make sure that there are only four stanzas of four lines each.

MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM

Tennyson's contribution to the discussion of the question whether woman shall continue a parasitic existence, dependent on father, brother, or husband, or whether she shall have the right to live her own life, not necessarily dependent on man. The poet reck-

his own rede and avoids the falsehood of extremes. He would preserve all that is valuable in the old order and reach out to all that is promising in the new. The married state is, however, the ideal. Tennyson lived to see provision made for the education of women almost as ample as that sketched in *The Princess*.

3. out of Lethe. Not, I venture to think, "the period of oblivion before birth," but the incredible period of oblivion and development before history began its record.

6. Stays all this fair young planet. Is the mainstay, the determining influence of life everywhere.

56. one thro' whom I loved her. His mother. Cf. *Isabel*, another filial tribute.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

A rare instance of an official ode that is also a poem. The inspiration was genuine, for Wellington was the hero of the nation, He had beaten Napoleon and saved England. He was only forty-five at Waterloo, and during the last forty-seven years of his life, he was much in the public eye. Tennyson saw him only once. Carlyle the iconoclast, saw him at a ball in Bath House in 1850 and grew enthusiastic. "I had never seen till now how beautiful, and what an expression of graceful simplicity, veracity, and nobleness there is about the old hero when you see him close at hand. . . . Eyes beautiful light blue, full of mild valour, with infinitely more faculty and geniality than I had fancied before; the face wholly gentle, wise, valiant, and venerable. . . . He glided slowly along, slightly saluting this and that other, clear, clean, fresh as this June evening itself, till the silver buckle of his stock vanished into the door of the next room, and I saw him no more." *Carlyle's Life In London*, II, 48 f. Wellington at one end of the scale, the old style northern farmer at the other, are one in their devotion to duty, one of the soundest traits in British character. Has Duty been deified by any other nation as in Wordsworth's Ode, or in Nelson's last signal at Trafalgar?

The various readings of this poem illustrate how careful and

minute was Tennyson's self-criticism. Through the courtesy of Professor Henry van Dyke, I am permitted to reproduce them here.

28. **clearest of ambitious crime.** It surprised European observers that Wellington, the man on horseback, did not make himself a military dictator; just as fifty years later Grant surprised them by resigning his huge command and retiring into civil life.

42. **World-victor's victor.** *Le vainqueur du vainqueur du monde.*

55. **the towering car.** May still be seen in the chapel of St. Paul's with the long list of Wellington's battles on it.

80. **who is he.** Nelson's question: buried in St. Paul's.

122. **Duty's iron crown.** This is the recurrent burden of Tennyson's praise.

172. **He bade you guard.** "His last important service was a letter upon the defenceless state of the south coast, addressed to Sir John Burgoyne, which had great results."

217. **God Himself is sun.** "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it; and the Lamb is the light thereof." *Rev.* xxi, 23.

246. **we refrain From talk of battles.** The note of "Recessional."

NORTHERN FARMER. OLD STYLE

Written in Feb., 1861, and published with *Enoch Arden*, 1864. The farmer was not Baumber of the moated grange at Somersby, but a character imagined from the dying words of an old-world farm-bailiff, as reported to Tennyson by a great-uncle, — "God A'mighty little knows what he's about, a-taking me. An' squire will be so mad an' all."

The old pagan is on his death-bed: he has lived his life and passes it over in review. Religion meant going to church and patiently enduring the parson's meaningless "bummin'," the payment of tithe and poor-rate, and voting always on the side of the squire. "Godamoughty" is simply a Being who interferes tyrannically with his settled habits and plans. He has however a very real religion, —

a religion of duty. He has done his duty by the parson, by the land, by the Squire, by the doubtful "barne" of Bessy Marria, — in fact, he has done his duty by all. He can look back on the accomplishment of a great life-work, the reclaiming of Thurnaby waste : and he is not afraid to compare that achievement with the parson's one sermon a week : for has he not made two leaves of grass grow where one grew before ? He awaits the opening of the door without fear, but with a certain annoyance at thoughts of the inconvenience that his death will cause Squire, of the innovations that may come upon the land, and of the foolishness of the teetotal doctor setting up his opinion on ale against the tested rules of thirty years.

Pitiful no doubt is this antique loyalty to an employer and devotion to his interests : pitiful and obsolete. Obsolete like the dialect seems to be the worship of duty as duty : but it made England what she was.

THE DAISY

Written in 1853, published with *Maud* in 1855. A charming record of *impressions de voyage* of an actual poet upon his wedding-journey ; illustrating once more the call of the South to the genius of the North. The prose version is given in a letter of Mrs. Tennyson's : see *Memoirs and Correspondence of Coventry Patmore*, II, 306.

13. **slender campanili** : bell-towers, not bell-flowers, though "grew" and the last lines of the stanza might seem to indicate possible confusion with "campanula."

23. **Cogoletto**. Near Genoa : supposed to be the birthplace of Columbus.

37. **That hall**. The Palazzo Ducale at Genoa. Apparently Tennyson saw only plaster and wicker effigies of the grave severe Genovese, as the French had destroyed the originals.

43. **Cascine**. The Park at Florence.

"You remember down at Florence our Cascinè
Where the people on the feast days walk and drive."

Mrs. Browning, *The Dance*.

44. **Boboli** : The beautiful gardens at the rear of the Pitti Palace.

75. **Virgilian rustic measure.** This passage "alludes to the episode in praise of Italy, *Georgics* ii, 159,

"Anne lacus tantos; te, Lari Maxume, teque,
fluctibus et fremitu asurgens Benace marino?"

— "or (shall I speak) of those mighty lakes; of thee, Larius, the greatest, and thee, Benacus, heaving with the swell and the roar of the ocean?" (Mustard). "Among the many metres which Tennyson invented, he was especially proud of that of 'The Daisy,' which he called 'a far-off echo of the Horatian Alcaic.'" *Memoir*, I, 341. (Mustard).

78. **the Lariano.** "The Latin name of Lake Como was Lacus Larius; hence the name of the steamboat." Van Dyke.

79. **that fair port.** Varenna, on the eastern shore of Como.

80. **Theodolind.** Theodolinda, the beautiful and pious daughter of Garibald king of Bavaria. For her romantic story, see Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, cap. xlv. Menzel, *History of Germany*, lxxxix, and George Meredith, *The Song of Queen Theodolinda*.

WILL

Published in *Maud, and Other Poems*, 1855. A thoroughly English glorification of Horace's "Justum ac tenacem propositi virum," showing also the other side of the medal, the degeneration of the weak in will. Scott, writhing in agony on a sofa, but dictating *Ivanhoe*, or sitting down, an old man, broken in mind and body, to write off his tremendous debts, is an illustration of the first verse. Coleridge, never finishing his poems, a slave to opium, leaving his tavern scores for gin-and-water unpaid, leaving his wife and children to be supported by his brother-in-law, Southey, is an illustration of the second.

6. **Who seems a promontory of rock.** A not uncommon simile; cf. *Iliad*, xv, 618-621; *Aeneid*, vii, 586-590; and Marcus Aurelius, iv, 49. "Be like a promontory, against which the waves are always breaking. It stands fast and stills the waters that rage around it."

20. **The city sparkles.** Tennyson sets the city, the goal of the traveller in the desert, on a hill, above the level of the plain.

It shows merely as a small white sparkle at the immeasurable distance. The weak-willed never attain to it.

WAGES

More than any other poet of the nineteenth century, Tennyson has shown in his work understanding of the new scientific conceptions that seem to press so heavily upon the Christian religion, and yet he clung passionately to the central Christian doctrine of immortality. The first two lines embody a thought he often expresses; the pettiness of man and human destiny, with "sullen Lethe rolling doom" on all things here, a thought to paralyze all effort. Virtue, — the Good, — must be immortal; he believes and asserts, without being able to prove. The thought in the second stanza is the same as in *Ænone*, "And because right is right, to follow right Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence." "I cannot but think moral good is the crown of man. But what is it without immortality? Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die. If I knew the world were coming to an end in six hours, would I give my money to a starving beggar?" (J. A. Symonds in *The Century*, May, 1893.)

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

Mentioned as written, in Mrs. Tennyson's Journal for Dec. 1, 1867: "He brought down to me his psalm-like poem, 'Higher Pantheism.'" *Memoir*, II, 48. "Tennyson now took Barnes and me to his top-room." Darwinism, Man from Ape, would that really make any difference?" "Time is nothing (said T.): are we not all part of Deity?" "Pantheism," hinted Barnes, who was not at ease in this sort of speculation. "Well" says Tennyson, "I think I believe in Pantheism, of a sort." *Memoir*, I, 514. Pantheism "regards the finite world as simply a mode, limitation, part, or aspect of one eternal absolute Being; and of such a nature that from the standpoint of this Being no distinct existence can be attributed to it." The "Higher" pantheism is a re-statement of Christian doctrine, God immanent in the universe, but transcending it, God ruling and Man, the subject, apart from God, but able to

enter into relation with Him. (Compare Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*.) Tennyson was deeply interested in such problems. The Metaphysical Society owed its existence to him. All shades of belief were represented in it from Ultramontanes like Cardinal Manning and "Ideal" Ward to agnostics like Huxley and Comtists like Frederic Harrison. This poem was read at the first meeting, at the Deanery, Westminster, June 2, 1869. See *Memoir*, II, 166-172.

2. **The Vision of Him.** What Carlyle, quoting the speech of the *Erdgeist* in *Faust* (*Sartor Resartus*, bk. I, cap. viii) calls "the living visible Garment of God."

8. **That which has power to feel 'I am I.'** Compare, "With men of a speculative turn, . . . there come seasons, meditative sweet yet awful hours, when in wonder and fear you ask yourself that unanswerable question: who am I; the thing that can say 'I' (*das Wesen das sich ICH nennt*)?" *Sartor Resartus*, bk. I, cap. viii; and *In Memoriam*, xlv.

"The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that 'this is I.'"

10. **making Him broken gleams.** Cf. *In Memoriam*, poem.

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

15. **no God at all.** "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." *Ps.* liii.

17. **the ear of man.** Cf. *I Cor.*, ii, 9.

IN MEMORIAM

This poem was published in Tennyson's Golden Year, 1850, the year of his marriage and of his appointment to be Poet Laureate; but the first "elegies" were written in 1833, soon after Hallam's death. It has been censured as portraying a morbid and exaggerated grief; but many a mourner has turned to it instinctively for

the expression of his sorrow and has not found that expression overwrought. It has been called pessimistic and sceptical; but closer study shows almost anxious adherence to the historic lines of Christian belief.

The poem might be approached in many ways; but I have chosen to regard it as a monument of friendship. Those parts that deal with the relations between Tennyson and Hallam have been put in the forefront, in the hope that they may appeal to young and generous natures. "All the world loves a lover," says Emerson: he might have added "and a loyal friend." The record of this most famous of college friendships should attract the young to the poem as a whole. There will be time enough for study of other parts. The great problem raised by the death of a friend is suggested only in the broadest outline. The system of things seems pitiless, and militates against belief in a life after this life: but the instinctive protest of the affections is a force to be reckoned with; and, in the end, the mourner attains to peace and a confidence not to be shaken.

The commentaries on *In Memoriam* are very many. The two most elaborate studies are John F. Genung's *Tennyson's In Memoriam: Its Purpose and Structure*, and Thomas Davidson's *Prolegomena to In Memoriam*. The poet himself supplies the key to the poem: "It was meant to be a sort of *Divina Commedia*, ending with happiness. The sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested him. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole or for publication, until I found that I had written so many. The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts and suffering will find answer and relief only through Faith in a God of Love." *Memoir*, 1, 304 f.

Love Victorious

This poem is dated 1849 and represents for Tennyson, the conclusion of the whole matter. It is at once a creed and a prayer. The strong Son of God is Christ, the Maker of all things. The heart of the universe is immortal love.

5. **orbs of light and shade.** The sun and moon.

19. **broken lights of thée.** The "little systems" are only transient flashes, fragmentary parts, of the full and perfect light, the complete truth.

22. **things we see.** Τὰ φαινόμενα.

28. **as before.** As in the ages of faith.

42. **wasted youth.** Laid waste by affliction.

The Friend, the Heart of all Things

11. **a dream of good.** The dream is a dream of moral good. The poet's relation to his friend informs his outlook on the world, his whole philosophy.

Burial at Clevedon

Arthur Hallam died suddenly at Vienna, September, 1833, and the body was brought back to England for burial. "They chose his resting-place in a tranquil spot on a lone hill that overhangs the British Channel. He was buried in the chancel of Clevedon Court, in Somerset, by Clevedon Court, which had been his mother's early home. . . . In all England there is not a sweeter place than the sunny old court upon the hill with its wide prospects and grassy terraces."

College Re-visited

Tennyson and Hallam entered the same college, Trinity, the largest in Cambridge, in 1828. Tennyson left in 1831, after the death of his father; but Hallam remained until 1832 and took his degree.

4. **tumult of the halls.** "Hall" is the dining-hall of the college: examinations are held there. See Ruskin's *Praeterita*, 1, cap. xi.

20. **crash'd the glass.** Tossed their wine-glasses over their shoulders, after emptying them, that they might never be used to honor a less worthy toast. See Kipling, *The Man Who Was*.

21. **a band.** Tennyson was a member of "The Apostles," a club of young fellow-students, who, nearly all, rose to distinction. Knowles is the authority for the statement that Tennyson here

referred to the "Water Club," so called because no wine was used.

36. **The God within him.** The literal meaning of "enthusiasm."

40. **the bar of Michael Angelo.** The well-known portrait of this supreme artist is almost in profile and shows a heavy frontal ridge, just over the eye-brows. The same feature appears in the Chantry bust of Hallam. In physical appearance, the two friends were a complete contrast; both were about six feet, but Hallam was the fair Saxon type, while Tennyson was dark as an Indian.

Holidays at Somersby

An intimate picture of refined and cultured English life. The poet for the time forgets his grief in remembering happier things. Hallam was engaged to Miss Emily Tennyson, then only seventeen. He taught her Italian, and the poem he offered in the Chancellor's competition was in *tersa rima*, the metre of the *Divina Commedia*.

1. **witch elms.** Or "wych-elms", the Scotch variety, smaller than the English elm. "Wych" is "weak", and is apparently applied to trees with pendulous branches. Cf. *Ode to Memory*, which also describes the lawn of Somersby rectory, as it was: for these trees were afterwards cut down.

47. **crimson-circled star.** Before Venus, the evening star, had sunk into the sea, after sunset. Venus is supposed to be an off-shoot of the sun.

The Friend's Character

Tennyson's estimate of Hallam may seem exaggerated, until confirmed by independent testimony. Alford wrote: "Hallam was a man of wonderful mind and knowledge on all subjects, hardly credible at his age. . . . I long ago set him down for the most wonderful person I ever knew. He was of the most tender, affectionate disposition." *Memoir*, 1, Gladstone, who was at Eton with Hallam, wrote, "There was perhaps no one among those who were blessed with his friendship, . . . who did not feel at once bound closely to him by commanding affection, and left far behind by the

rapid, full and rich development of his ever-searching mind." *Memoir*, I, 299.

1. **Heart-affluence.** "Power of rich discourse acquired in an intellectual home." Hallam's house, 67, Wimpole st., "the long unlovely street," was one of the most distinguished meeting-places for literary people in London. Miss Elizabeth Barrett, with her eccentric father, and grown-up brothers and sisters lived at No. 50. in the same street.

3. **critic clearness.** "As a critic there was no one upon whose taste and judgment I had so great reliance. I never was sure that I thoroughly understood or appreciated any poem till I had discussed it with him." Letter of a friend, quoted in *Remains in Verse and Prose of Arthur Hallam*, Preface, xxxiv.

16. **blind hysterics of the Celt.** This is hardly just to France, and the principles of 1789; but it represents Tennyson's characteristic attitude towards any but the English form of freedom. See Dowden; *Literary Studies*, *Mr. Tennyson*, and *Mr. Brown-ing*.

17. **manhood fused.** Chantrey's portrait bust of Hallam shows a singularly handsome and well-proportioned face.

The Friend's Eloquence

In the preface to the *Remains in Prose and Verse of Arthur Hallam*, a personal friend writes, "There was . . . no kind of discussion in which he did not take an active and brilliant part," and mentions "his natural skill in the dazzling fence of rhetoric."

Gentleman Defined

The gentleman is especially an English ideal. Compare Newman's definition, *The Idea of a University*, Discourse VIII, 10, and Ruskin's in *Modern Painters*, Part IX, chap. vii, *Of Vulgarity*.

Tennyson insists on the usual contrast between outward form and the inner reality. In Hallam the harmony between his real nature and outward manner was complete, *politesse de cœur*.

3. **a golden ball.** The orb with Edward the Confessor's cross upon it, a symbol of universal sovereignty, held in a king's

left hand as the sceptre in the right. See the great seals of the early English kings.

The Friend's Letters

With the vanishing of our beloved dead into the grave, everything that holds the impress of their personality becomes precious. The room, the bed, the vacant chair remind us of our loss, but the pang they give us we would not put aside. Above all, the letters of the departed are treasured, for there are the very words, the familiar turns of expression they used in life. The vanished hand crossed these very characters, passed over these very pages. As we read them, we almost hear the sound of the voice that is still. The words seem to live.

This elegy has two pictures, a night-piece and the coming of the dawn, both full of the soft, domestic charm of English landscape. Lines 35-44, describe the ecstatic state, which was no unfamiliar experience with Tennyson.

41. *Æonian music*. Eternal, everlasting music. Cf. *In Memoriam*, xxxv, 10.

"The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down the Æonian hills."

45. *Vague words*. The artist struggles with the same difficulty as the metaphysician, the difficulty of expressing thought, which is plastic, in words, which are rigid. Cf. *Dream of Fair Women*, last stanza: and Stevenson, *Technical Elements of Style in Literature*.

Nature Pitiless

"The hope of immortality still farther discredited," or "the hideous 'No' of Nature." F. W. Robertson. Compare Darwin, *Origin of Species*, cap. x, *On Extinction*, but this work did not appear until nine years after *In Memoriam*. Tennyson was early familiar with these new scientific conceptions, saw their full import, gave poetical yet accurate expression to them, and yet his faith survived, if somewhat baffled and broken-winged. The gist of this "elegy" is that Nature offers no hope of immortality. Man shall

vanish utterly from the planet like the countless races that have preceded him. If this be true, man's life with all his striving is meaningless. The monstrous animals of primeval times struggling for existence were more comprehensible.

26. O for thy voice. The voice of his friend.

The Heart's Revolt

"The atheism of the Understanding is annihilated by the Heart. We feel God—we do not find him out." F. W. Robertson. "The heart asserts God in face of the doubt of the sense and the intellect." King. It is to be understood as a summary of the poet's experience, as given at length in previous poems. The first stanza grapples with the difficulty of rendering the conception of God in terms of human thought. The second means God is not to be found in Nature or philosophy. In the third the decay of faith is likened to the crumbling of the coast-line into the ocean. Arnold compares it to the ebbing of the tide all round the world. If then the temptation comes to part with faith, the heart with its knowledge of its own experience protests with heat like a man in anger. This idea he at once withdraws and modifies, as being an almost arrogant assertion of strength. In his humility, he says "I am but a child crying for my Father," as before he wrote

"So runs my dream: but what am I!
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry."

LIV.

Critics have sneered at this attitude of the poet's, as indicative of weakness: but the idea is Christ's teaching, man must become as a little child, if he is to enter the kingdom.

21. And what I am. "Originally written 'what I seem,' 'beheld again what *is*' that is, God, real being, as distinguished from phenomenal existence, 'and no man understands,' the incomprehensible One; 'and out of darkness' in which He is shrouded, 'came the hands that reach through nature, moulding men.' We see His working, we see not Him." King.

The Goal of Ill

"Ill" or "evil" is here a term of wide meaning, further illustrated by the poet in the phrases of lines 3 and 4. — "pangs of nature," all forms and phases of physical suffering,

"Ache of the birth, ache of the helpless days
Ache of hot youth, and ache of manhood's prime,
Ache of the chill grey years and choking death" —

"sins of will," all moral evils, — "defects of doubt," "defects growing out of doubt, or perhaps even constituted by doubt" (King), — "taints of blood," those fatal weaknesses born with the child that no skill or wisdom can counteract. In face of the great mysteries of evil, sin and suffering, the poet utters the hope that good will come of it all, and is for the time a glorious optimist, dreaming a dream of good.

The Larger Hope

The key to this poem seems to me to be in the second line, "No life" being equivalent to "no single life," and, in opposition to other interpreters, I think the connection with the preceding poem is most intimate. "We trust" that not a moth or a worm perishes in vain. The argument continues, Does not this "wish" spring from what is nearest the divine in our human nature? But nature in her carelessness of life seems to contradict this view. The study of Nature then shakes his faith, and in the darkness (inability to understand and reconcile the two), he would come near to God, and trust even faintly the larger hope, the hope for all.

God, Nature and the Friend

I do not find that, anywhere in this poem, the poet thinks of his friend as lost, as a mere influence, not a surviving personality. Here after the storm he has reached the calmer air. He has attained to a working philosophy of life. His friendship has been a prevailing influence in bringing this about, and colors his conception of God and the universe.

Supplicatio.

I. O living will. The poet stated himself that he means here "free will in man." Will is "the essence of human personality which will endure,

"When all that seems shall suffer shock."

The Poet summoned this "living will" to "rise like a fountain" in "the spiritual rock," with obvious reference to 1 Cor. 10: 4, "flow thro' our deeds and make them pure," so that with action and character purified, our cry may rise from these earthly scenes

"To One that with us works." King.

II. Until we close. At death. Death does not lead to Nirvana, the absorption of all souls in God (see poem XLVII), but to closer union with our beloved dead and even those we leave behind, in God.

MAUD

The germ of this poem is to be found in xxvi, 1. "O that 't were possible, &c.," which were written in 1834, and published in *The Tribute*, 1837. It was also printed at the end of *The Annual Register* for 1837. Aubrey de Vere writes, *Memoir*, 1, 379, "It had struck him, in consequence, I think, of a suggestion made by Sir John Simeon, that, to render the poem fully intelligible, a preceding one was necessary. He wrote it; the second poem too required a predecessor; and thus the whole work was written, as it were, backwards."

Strange to say, *Maud* was severely criticised upon its appearance, and there are still those who regard it as a "splendid failure." This poem was one of Tennyson's favorites, and often chosen by him for reading aloud. The adverse criticism surprised and annoyed him, and not a few of his admirers. The lover is the only son of a ruined gambler and suicide. Of a fine-strung, sensitive nature, he has grown up alone; everything in his environment he sees reminds him of his father's tragic end. He is a student and has never mingled with the world. What wonder that the sweet bells are jangled? Brimley, one

of Tennyson's best critics, pertinently remarks, "To strong men, the world is not made bitter by a father's ruin and suicide, by the prevalence of meanness and cruelty, by contemptuous neglect and general absence of sympathy." The hero is conscious of his own failings, just as Hamlet is, and longs for betterment. "O for a man to arise in me!" he cries. He is on the verge of madness or self-destruction when Maud crosses his path. At once the real strength of his character is revealed; he shows that he has an infinite capacity for loving, and one lyrical outburst after another opens up depth within depth of pure, tender, passionate devotion. No wonder Maud loved a man capable of homage so perfect, so sincere, so delicate as breathes in "Come into the Garden," and "I have led her home." For a time all goes well; he passes from doubt and jealousy to happy assurance of his love returned; and then, in a moment, the desire of his eyes is taken from him and by his own fault. Then his brain turned. Maud's lover is a modern Romeo. Shakspeare's hero also is "easily moved to hatred, despair, ecstasy, jealousy, rage and madness," and yet he awakens love in the breast of the peerless Juliet, out-jests the prince of wits, Mercutio, and slays fierce Tybalt, the most accomplished swordsman in Verona. Mr. W. H. Mallock seems to be the only critic of note who has perceived the real significance of *Maud*. This much-abused age of ours, this imitative, faithless, materialistic age, has one excellence no other age possessed. *Maud* is a revelation how a mere modern can love: it is the revelation of a purer, more beautiful, more tender, more strong and more consuming passion than any former time dreamed of. The reverence for the beloved woman is holier than ever before. And *Maud* illustrates this, for whatever may be said of the lover's personal character, nothing can be brought against the character of his love. Even the shadow of an impure thought never crosses his mind. His passion transforms and transfigures him; out of weakness it makes him strong. Granted his nature is diseased, such love is an accident in it. In strong natures, such as the heroes of *MacLeod of Dare* and *Kenelm Chillingly*, love manifests the same refinement, purity and power.

This section of the poem (xviii) reveals the lover's rapture, upon the knowledge that his love is returned. He has led Maud

home to the Hall, and at midnight he lies beneath the cedar-tree within the sound of the sea, trying to realize his happiness.

18. **dark cedar.** There was a famous cedar of Lebanon in the grounds at Farringford.

36. **a sad astrology.** The new conception of the insignificance of the earth, a mere grain of sand in the midst of suns and systems in the waste spaces of the universe, and consequently, the insignificance of man lay on Tennyson like a frost. Cf. *Vastness*.

55. **like men in drinking-songs.** In perhaps the most famous of drinking-songs, the song of Bishop Golias, the thought of death is introduced into the first line. "Mihi est propositum in taberna mori."

60. **the dusky strand of Death.** The thought of death, of the end, of separation mingled with the thought of love, makes love more precious. The metaphor is taken from rope-making. The cordage for the Royal Navy was distinguished by strands of different colors to prevent or detect theft.

76. **ye meanwhile.** The stars are apostrophized.

RIZPAH

See 2 *Samuel*, xxi, 8-10. "But the king took the two sons of Rizpah . . . and he delivered them to the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord. . . . And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

Tennyson's own account of the source of this poem is in the *Memoir*, II, 250. Phæbe Hessel, an old character of Brighton, who had been apparently a private soldier, "obtained such information as led to the conviction of Rooke and Howell for robbing the mail, a circumstance which made a considerable sensation at the close of the last century. They were gibbeted on the spot where the robbery was committed, and there is an affecting story connected with the body of Rooke. When the elements had caused the clothes and flesh to decay, his aged mother, night after night, in all weathers, and the more tempestuous the weather the more

frequent the visits, made a sacred pilgrimage to the lonely spot on the Downs, and it was noticed that on her return she always brought something away with her in her apron. Upon being watched it was discovered that the bones of the hanging man were the objects of her search, and as the wind and rain scattered them on the ground she conveyed them to her home. There she kept them, and, when the gibbet was stripped of its horrid burden, in the dead silence of the night she interred them in the hallowed enclosure of Old Shoreham Churchyard. What a sad story of a Brighton Rispah!"

Of this poem, Swinburne wrote in 1881: "Never since the beginning of all poetry were the twin passions of terror and pity more divinely done into deathless words or set to more perfect and profound magnificence of music: never more inseparably fused and harmonized into more absolute and sublime identity." *Tennyson and Musset, Fortnightly Review*, Feb. 1881.

1. **the wind over land.** As a child in Somersby rectory, Tennyson made his first line of verse, lisping in numbers, "I hear a voice that 's speaking in the wind."

16. **night has crept.** A common figure for death. "The night cometh when no man can work."

38. **all the ships.** The Downs are high and bare, and the gibbet was close to the narrow seas, which are always thronged with shipping.

54. **they had moved in my side.** Swinburne writes: "Not one (of all the great poets) . . . has ever touched the very deepest and finest chord on the lyre of the human spirit with a diviner power, a more godlike strength of tenderness than Mr. Tennyson has touched it here. Nothing more piteous, more passionate, more adorable for intensity of beauty, was ever before this wrought by human cunning into the likeness of such words as words are powerless to praise." *Tennyson and Musset, Fortnightly Review*, Feb. 1881.

THE REVENGE

First appeared in *The Nineteenth Century* in 1878. The first line "was on my father's desk for years, but he finished the ballad at

last at once in a day or two." *Memoir*, II, 142. The probable date of composition is 1873.

The sub-title "A Ballad of the Fleet" might seem to imply that Grenville's exploit lived in the popular memory; but after the celebration by Raleigh, Markham, Bacon and Linschoten at the time, this doughty deed was forgotten until the mid nineteenth century. Apparently the national heart was more deeply stirred by the tale of the wounded Sidney handing the water to the dying soldier, and remembered his courtesy better than Grenville's dying vaunt. In a thousand years of the rough island story, there are many victories, many glorious defeats to keep in mind.

Grenville belonged to a famous Cornish family which has given many sons to the land and sea service of their country. As Froude has shown, the backbone of the British resistance to Spain lay in the western counties, the home of the sea-dogs. In *Westward Ho!* Kingsley softens the traits of Grenville's character: he was an extreme type of a fierce, indomitable race, the Englishmen of the Elizabethan era. He was a very wealthy land-owner; but he preferred a life of action to a life of pleasure.

The original source is *A Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Iles of Açores this last Sommer betwixt the "Reuenge" and an Armada of the King of Spaine*, by Sir Walter Raleigh, Grenville's own cousin. This tract appeared anonymously in November, 1591; Hakluyt reprinted it in 1599 and credited it to Raleigh. The fight took place on the 31st of August, O. S., or the 10th of September, N. S. Grenville was freely blamed for needless foolhardiness in losing a Queen's ship, and a commission was appointed to inquire into the circumstances of his death. Raleigh's tract is a defense of his friend and kinsman. Other contemporary versions are Gervase Markham's poem, *The Most Honorable Tragedie of Sir Richard Grinuile, Knight* (1595) and Linschoten's *Discours of Voyages* (1596-1598). Modern versions are Froude, *Short Studies*, I, *England's Forgotten Worthies*; Linton, *Great Odds At Sea*; Massey, *Sir Richard Grenville's Last Fight*; Stevenson, *The English Admirals*.

The whole transaction has been carefully studied by a most competent authority, Mr. Julian S. Corbett. From a military point of view, no end was attained by the sacrifice of *The Revenge* and her

crew. Grenville's duty as a naval commander was to get his sick men on board and rejoin his squadron with all speed. If six ships against fifty-three was too great odds, one against fifty-three was sheer madness. Grenville could have easily made his escape, for *The Revenge*, a first-class "long ship" of the new English model, could easily outtail the lumbering Spanish galleons, but he chose deliberately to sail in the opposite direction through a gap in the Spanish fleet which was approaching in four divisions. His motive appears to have been pure bravado, like Monson in his single vessel backing his topsail and waiting for the three Spaniards detached from the convoy of the plate fleet to take him; but they did not accept his insolent challenge. It was like Raleigh leading the van into Cadiz harbor in 1596, disdaining to answer the flanking fire of the whole galley squadron except by a blare of his trumpet, while he steered the *War Sprite* straight at the "great *San Philip*," resolved "to be revenged for the *Revenge*."

Corbett sums up: "So perished the last of a race of soldiers of the sea to whom our naval traditions owe a golden legacy. Strongly as we may condemn the obstinate presumption to which the '*Revenge*' was sacrificed, it is certain that unless an officer be touched with a breath of the spirit that day on the '*San Paolo*' in the midst of the enemy, he is unfit to command a ship-of-war. Without a glow of its fire, ships become but counters and tactics sink to pedantry." *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, II, 387.

7. **six ships of the line.** The term arose much later, when instead of single ship actions, squadrons and fleets manœuvred and fought in "line ahead." A ship of the line was a ship fit to lie in such a line, a ship of the largest size with the heaviest armament, a "first-rate." *The Revenge* was among the best of the Queen's ships, measuring 500 tons, carrying a crew of 250 men, and very heavy batteries. She was Drake's flagship all through the fight with the Armada.

12. **these Inquisition dogs.** As Froude points out (*English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century*), it was the militant Protestant minority of the southern ports that felt the power of Spain most heavily and finally dragged the reluctant Queen and government into war. Grenville's speech represents their temper and their attitude to the great Catholic world power.

57. **Ship after ship.** Froude and Tennyson exaggerate, though no exaggeration is necessary. Of the fifty-three ships in the Spanish fleet, a large number were victuallers. Still *The Revenge* was actually engaged with fifteen ships, carrying 5000 men. Besides beating off countless boarding attacks, she sank two ships alongside; another was so badly mauled that she sank in St. Michael's bay, and a fourth was beached to save her crew. Such a record is to be explained by the skill of the English seamen-gunners and the weight of *The Revenge's* primary batteries. See the discussion in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, s. n.

Nothing can be added to Bacon's comment on the great sea-fight. It is 'memorable even beyond credit, and to the height of some heroic fable.'

89. **Sink me the ship.** Apparently an impossible order, if the powder was exhausted: but perhaps Sir Richard did not know. Stevenson (*British Admirals*) suggests scuttling; but that would be a slow process, and *The Revenge* had six feet of water in her hold already.

101. **I have fought.** Grenville's last words are reported by Linschoten, who was at Tercera during the action: but they are plainly dressed up. The significant phrase is "that hath done his dutie, as he was bound to do." One thinks of dying Nelson in the cockpit of the *Victory*, with his backbone shot through, repeating "Thank God, I have done my duty."

112. **wind from the lands.** The West Indies. Raleigh says the wind was W. N. W.

THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

No later Thackeray has included Tennyson in another series of "English Humorists," but his "rich humor" was an essential part of his personality, as his son notes in the preface to the *Memoir*. It is manifested constantly in his life and work. Locker-Lampson, a good judge, who knew him well, wrote: "His humor is of the dryest, it is admirable. Did anyone ever make one laugh more heartily than Alfred Tennyson? He tells a story excellently, and has a catching laugh." *Memoir*, II, 80. The poet who could persuade the London lady that the common English daisy was a rare

rhododendron which grew only in the Isle of Wight must have had plenty of fun in him. In such interpretations of English rustic life as the two "Northern Farmers," "The Church-Warden," "The Northern Cobbler," he shows not only complete comprehension, but the most genial sympathy. The "spinster" herself has been charged with selfishness, by some ungallant or envious critics, most unjustly. In view of the perils of marriage, (Stevenson called it "so much more dangerous than the wildest sea") which she discerned so clearly, who shall venture to call her unwise?

4. fellers. This is also the term used by the fine ladies in *Sir Charles Grandison* for their admirers.

106. my own fine Jackman. The *clematis Jackmanii*, with large purple blooms.

TO VIRGIL

First appearance in *The Nineteenth Century*, September, 1882. Virgil died at Tarentum (or Brundisium) on Sept. 21, A. D. 82.

The poem is a series of apostrophes forming a single sentence of homage, "I salute thee." Poets have written the most memorable criticism on poets, certainly the criticism that is best remembered. Such phrases as Spenser's on Chaucer, "well of English undefiled," or Jonson's on Shakspeare, "He was not for an age but for all time," or Byron's on Crabbe, "Nature's sternest painter yet the best," contain literary judgments of real value. A very striking instance is Mrs. Browning's *Masque of Poets*, in which she reviews the poets of the world. This "appreciation" of Virgil belongs to the class of metrical criticism. Tennyson was a lifelong student and admirer of the classic poet and resembled him in his patriotism, his genuine love of country life, in his tenderness and reverence, and in the refinement, learning and finish of his workmanship. The first stanza touches on the main topics of the *Æneid*, the third on the themes of the *Georgics*, the fourth refers to the first and the sixth *Eclogues* and the fifth to the fourth *Eclogue*, the sixth and seventh to the famous speech of Anchises in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, beginning "Principio, cælum, ac terras camposque liquentes." The poem is full of reminiscences and variations of Virgilian phrases and echoes of Virgilian music.

3. he that sang. Hesiod.

6. in a lonely word. Tennyson instanced "cunctantem" in *Æneid*, vi, 211 as an example (*Memoir*, II, 385). It refers to the golden branch, which Æneas broke off and took to the Sibyl.

11. Universal Nature. A Tennysonian version of

"totamque, infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet."

Æn. vi, 726 f.

12. majestic in thy sadness. Excellent examples are the questions of Æneas, in the under-world.

O pater! anne aliquas ad coelum hinc ire putandum est
Sublimes animas, iterumque in tarda reverti
Corpora? quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?

Æn. vi, 719-721.

14. Golden branch. Doing for us what the golden bough (see note to l. 6) did for Æneas, leading us magically through a dim by-gone world.

18. Island sunder'd once. Cf. *Eclogue* 1, 63.

Et, penitus toto divisos orbe, Britannos.

19. I salute thee, Mantovano. Virgil was born at Andes in the district of Mantua. In the second canto of the *Inferno*, Dante addresses Virgil, "O anima cortese Mantovana." There is a peculiar bond between England and Italy. English poets, from Chaucer and Milton to Byron and the Brownings, have visited Italy, have drawn their inspiration from Italy, have lived and died in Italy. Modern Italy remembers still with gratitude England's decisive interference on her behalf in the great crisis of her struggle for unity and freedom. Florence treasures the dust of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Rome holds the graves of Keats and Shelley.

VASTNESS

Appeared first in *Macmillan's Magazine*, Nov. 1885. The statements in the *Memoir*, II, 314, 343 are contradictory.

The poem is a summary of human activity, good and bad, on

the planet, a question and an answer. The traditional "geocentric" theory of the universe, which prevailed until the middle of the nineteenth century, seemed to be utterly discredited by the new conceptions of natural science. Our planet was dispossessed from its former place of importance: with the planet's importance went the importance of man her inhabitant. The universe increased immeasurably in extent, and the dignity of the human race diminished swiftly in the inverse ratio. In *Maud* the lover apostrophizes the stars, —

"Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man."

This "nothingness of man" finds noble expression in Tennyson's *Pulvis et Umbra*. It seems to lie like an incubus on much of Tennyson's later poetry, to pain and to oppress him. In this poem after facing the question fairly, "What is the meaning of life, if men perish like the beasts?" the poet finds his answer in the instinctive revolt of the heart. Love cannot be persuaded that the Grave is the End. The answer in the final line was originally given to a second speaker. By "him" can Hallam be meant?

Tennyson's MS. note is "What matters anything in the world without full faith in the Immortality of the Soul and of Love?" *Memoir*, II, 343.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

Of "Merlin and the Gleam" written in August, 1889, he says: "In the story of Merlin and Nimue I have read that Nimue means the Gleam — which signifies in my poem the higher poetic imagination. Verse iv is the early imagination, Verse v alludes to the Pastorals." *Memoir*, II, 366.

Tennyson had the ideal career of the poet. Art is long and life is short; but Tennyson was given length of days to mature his powers and learn his craft. He went if not from strength to strength, at least from one variety of excellence to another. This poem is the artist's autobiography, his career reviewed by himself. Popular interpretation would make "The Gleam" the ideal, and, as poems have sometimes more in them than the authors know, perhaps this is not wrong.

CROSSING THE BAR

Tennyson's swan song. "Written in my father's eighty-first year, on a day in October, when we came from Aldworth to Farringford. Before reaching Farringford he had the Moaning of the Bar in his mind, and after dinner he showed me this poem written out.

"I said, 'That is the crown of your life's work.' He answered, 'It came in a moment.' He explained the 'Pilot' as 'that Divine and Unseen Who is always guiding us.'

"A few days before my father's death he said to me: 'Mind you put "Crossing the Bar" at the end of all editions of my poems.' " *Memoir*, II, 366 f.

8. Turns again home. The first two stanzas express the natural desire for euthanasia, which in Tennyson's case was so amply fulfilled. Here once more in literature recurs the old idea that a fair death is parting even at the turning of the tide. So Falstaff passed like a chrisom child; and faithful, homely Barkis. One must have lived beside tidal water as Tennyson did and learned its moods to appreciate fully this figure. After the lull of "slack water" comes the distinct change of note in the lapping on the shingle. The ebb has begun. It is the ebb that helps the ship out of harbor and out to sea.



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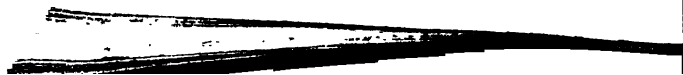
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